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Definitions of the English sentence

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DEFINITIONS OF THE ENGLISH SENTENCE

A THESIS
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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the concept 'sentence' with emphasis on the English sentence. It consists of four chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is a glance at the concept 'sentence' in general; the second chapter discusses a scholarly traditional grammarian's (Otto Jespersen's) view of the sentence; the third views the concept of the sentence held by two structural linguists, Leonard Bloomfield and Charles Carpenter Fries; and the fourth chapter traces the concept of the sentence held by Noam Chomsky, the theorist of generative-transformational grammar. The conclusion briefly reviews the essence of the four chapters.

Otto Jespersen was a great philologist with the keen eye of a neo-grammarian and the broad view of a general linguist. His revolutionary concept of the sentence at important occasions provides the twentieth-century linguists with inspiration.

Leonard Bloomfield, the unrivalled champion of structural linguistics, is followed by Charles Carpenter Fries, an able applied linguist, in looking at the sentence from a behavioristic point of view. Regarding the fact that American (taxonomic) structural linguistics applies to the study of English the same methods originally devised for the study of non-Indo-European American Indian languages, it is natural that the structuralists focus attention on the physical data of language. Hence, to them, as to Jespersen, any utterance capable of standing alone is a sentence.

To generative-transformational grammarians led by Noam Chomsky, whose work is inspired by seventeenth-century philosophical grammar, the observed sentence is only the visible part of the proverbial ice-berg.
CHAPTER I
THE SENTENCE

Apparently, since de Saussure's distinction of 'la langue' (the unconscious knowledge of language in a speech community) and 'la parole' (the speech acts of individuals in the community) linguists have been more conscious of the abstract aspect of language. 'La langue' which "is not and cannot be a physical fact,"1 according to de Saussure, consists of "linguistic signs," of which 'sentence' is one.2 Hence, sentences as "the individual elements of which languages contain an infinite number," are said to "belong to the world of abstract elements, analogous to 'concerto' in music."3 Later linguists, along with recognizing that "the natural unit of expression is the sentence,"4 are careful to clarify that "the term 'sentence' does not refer to an individual, temporally and spatially unique, product of a speaker's activity which can be heard and recorded. Such individual events are utterance-tokens."5

Obviously, the primary source of grammatical inquiries is the 'utterance-tokens,' the discovery and description of whose structure has

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2 Ibid., p. 203.
been the goal of (taxonomic) structural grammar, though from the point of view of the philosophical grammarian and the generative-transformational grammarian the uttered sentence displays only the surface of a deeper, abstract structure.

Since human language (though in its infinite creativity incomparable with any other form of communication) is only one of the innumerable forms of communication employed by life forms, it seems reasonable to agree with those who trace in its units the essence of communication at large. Communication "means the act of making common, and applies especially to information and feelings."6 In this broad sense, all nature seems to communicate in one way or another. From the sparkle of a star, to the growth of a seed, the amoeba's reaction to a stimulus, the honey-bee's dance, the mother hen's cluck, the cooings of the pigeons, the lion's roar, and virtually countless other similar instances, acts of communication are performed in which something is 'said' (i.e., communicated) about something else.7 And this faculty, which in grammar is called predication, is the bedrock of every grammatical human utterance.

It is said that the faculty of speech in man has developed and operates on the basis of his need to convey messages for elicitation of cooperation. It has begun with sentence-words and has evolved into complete predications. While animal cries are by no means comparable with human

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sentences, both groups operate on the same principle of predication. If a bird's alarm call puts the flock to flight, and a sentence like 'the building is on fire,' results in the evacuation of the building by the residents, the cry and the sentence have functioned alike: they have predicated (1) danger (2) of the situation. In short, the ultimate fact essential for the occurrence of any kind of communication seems to be predication. Hence, man is said to have always spoken in sentences—even at the earliest stages of development of speech when his utterances must have been unanalysable, indissoluble wholes. Like the baby whose uttering 'wawa' at the table implicitly predicates his need for water and elicits the cooperation of the hand of an elder in offering the glass of water, the early speakers' utterances, whatever their form, must have been predications—first implicit, increasingly becoming explicit.

This fact is more readily observable in the communication steps of young children at the threshold of learning their mother tongue, as well as in the operation of the sign language of American Indians. In both these activities the aim is the conveyance of the message and the exercise of social control, and the means is predication. If the Indian scout's smoke signal proclaims the presence of the enemy, game, etc., "the baby's one-word phrase is taken to be a predicate with its subject evident in the surrounding circumstances." Concerning children's sentence-words de Laguna says:


What the baby does from the beginning, when he is not indulging in pure vocal play, is to talk in complete, if rudimentary sentences. Thus a proper name of some individual known to the child is not used by him simply and definitely to designate that individual, but to make many other sorts of announcements about the person in question, or even about objects and events connected with him.  

From the child beginner's use of language linguists make inferences concerning the use of language by the earliest speakers. They believe that, like children, the earliest speakers used sentence-words. Antoine Meillet, for example, says, "the sentence of a single term is a normal thing, and it is undoubtedly from this that language takes its point of departure. Philologists who have reflected on the theory of the sentence have been aware of this for a long time."  

Jespersen, too, says the further back we trace the history of known languages, the more the sentence appears "as one indissoluble whole, in which those elements which we are accustomed to think of as single words were not yet separated."  

The evolution of complete structured sentences (consisting of separate words) began as the early speakers were more and more spurred by the need of communicating more complex situations. The early speakers' sentence-words could function only like the animal cries and the modern child's sentence-words, in direct reference to only simple, concrete, perceptual situations. Hence, "the need for coordinated action beyond the perceptually present situation and the need for coordinating such situations..."  

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10 de Laguna, p. 87.


complex and varied behavior as depends on analysis of situation brought about the evolution of the complete structured sentence.

But the complete structured sentence was not formed before its constituent parts (i.e., words) had evolved from the sentence-words. Like the baby's, the early speaker's sentence-words did not "denote the object in distinction from the qualities . . . [and] . . . the acts," which were centered in it. But just as the child, in order to be understood, in conformity to the usage of his community, becomes more discriminating in the application of his sentence-words, the early speakers, first by extension, and then by specification of the referents of their utterances, acquired independent, oral tokens for objects, qualities, and actions. Thus 'words' began to be formed. And since denuded of their comprehensive sentence-word capacities they could not function alone, their combined performances brought about the structured sentence. De Laguna describes these processes thus:

As the "name" comes to denote the object as such, in distinction from the acts which center in it and the qualities which it possesses, its use must be supplemented by that of a term which is capable of specifying the particular 'act' demanded by the occasion, i.e., by a verb, or by the predicative adjective which specifies the particular 'quality' of importance on the occasion.

As de Laguna says, this specialization of the words resulted from the

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13 de Laguna, p. 94.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., p. 98.
division of the sentence into the subject and the predicate:

As a matter of fact, it is only so far as the sentence itself undergoes internal differentiation into the functional parts, the subject and the predicate, that the distinction between the noun, which denotes the person or object and the verb, which denotes the act, can be definitely fixed. 16

And along with the specialization of words, the implicit predication developed into the explicit predication:

The process of the extension and fixation of terms proceeds 'pari passu' with the process by which the implicit predication of the undifferentiated sentence-word becomes the explicit predication of the differentiated sentence. 17

If the primary function of language is implementation of social control and elicitation of cooperation, as this control is brought about by all units from animal cry, child's sentence-word, sign language, to complete sentence, there must be a common factor shared by all. This factor as already stated has been the functioning of 'predication.' In all these units something refers to something else in a way that controls the behavior of the perceiver. In other words, they all are, implicitly or explicitly, units of predication. Hence, the sentence is essentially a predication.

This fact has long since been recognized. Aristotle employed the concepts subject (underlying part) and predicate (asserted part) in logic. And the fact that from the relation of the subject and the predicate a quality of completeness arises was embodied in Dionysius Thrax's definition of the sentence (c. 100 B.C.). Thrax, no doubt, taking the condition

16 de Laguna, p. 98.
17 Ibid.
of the presence of the subject and the predicate for granted in the sentence made no reference to them in his definition of the sentence. He defines the sentence thus: "A sentence is a combination of words, either in prose or verse making complete sense." 18

Concerning the fact that a sentence is a predication de Laguna says: "all language whatever its grammatical type, exhibits a structure the unit of which is the sentence with its functional parts, the subject and the predicate." 19 W. J. Entwistle, too says: "Organized grammar is based on the sentence and the sentence is essentially predication." 20 Entwistle further observes that the relation of the subject and the predicate is not always "S is P but more often and characteristically SP, e.g., 'John runs.' "21

However, despite the fact that since Aristotle's defining 'rhēma' (as "a sound that not only conveys a particular meaning but has a time reference as well," 22) 'predicate' has always been considered as containing (or consisting of) a verb, predication does not exclusively depend on the presence of a finite verb. As Herbert A. Strong, et al., say:

A sentence need not necessarily contain a finite verb .... In Latin and in Slavonic languages, the word answering to 'is' is very commonly suppressed; and in Latin epistolary language whole sentences appear in which no copula occurs .... In English we often employ sentences like "You here?", "I grateful to you!", "This to me!", "Your very good health!", "Long life to you!", "Three cheers for him!", "Why all this noise?",--and, again, such proverbs as

19 de Laguna, p. 110.
20 Entwistle, p. 167.
21 Ibid.
22 Dinneen, p. 80.
"Oak, smoke"; "Boys, noise"; "Ash, splash": and these are just as much sentences as "The man lives." 23

Leon Zawadowski too in a detailed study proves that the sentencehood of a sentence—"a fundamental linguistic unit . . . which is a construction with predicative value," 24 does not always depend on the presence of the finite verb, as for instance in Russian nominal sentences. According to Zawadowski, in such sentences the lack of finite verb is compensated by the existence of other "segmental signs of predication" for example, in the Russian nominal sentence predication is communicated through the employment of the short form of the adjective, as in "On umnjen i očen' mili" (he is clever and very nice) which is contrastable against the attributive use of the adjective in "On umnyj čelovek" (he is a clever man). 25

Zawadowski believes that (if it were established that "a sufficiently important set of languages have no predicemes [i.e., predications] with a distinct grammatical sign of predication of segmental type . . . but have predicemes with grammatical prosodic signs") it would be possible to widen the scope of the definition of the sentence by recognizing along with "sentences with a segmental sign of predication" also the "sentences with non-segmental (viz. prosodic) kind of predication." 26 But he concludes that in the absence of such evidence sentence should be defined as a

25 Ibid., pp. 110-112.
26 Ibid., p. 112.
predication with distinct segmental signs.

Thus, it seems that in any case 'sentence' and 'predication' designate the same referent. However, it is also a fact that the major predicative sentence-type in English is a predication in the familiar sense.

The sentence is a relatively late discovery in grammar, though, properly, grammar has always been that of the sentence because language consists of sentences, and grammar is the description of the sentences. But syntax has lately become the center of attention. This, of course, is not denying the fact that sentences were distinguished as far back as the fifth century B.C. when Protagoras classified four types of sentences: prayer, question, statement, and command. Nor is it disregarding Plato's concept of the 'Logos,' often translated "sentence" with its constituents 'onoma' and 'rhema,' which are rendered as "noun" and "verb" or "subject" and "predicate," as Aristotle further defined them. The fact is that the first authentic grammar—the distillation of the linguistic knowledge of the Greeks since their first reflections upon language—i.e., Dionysius Thrax's The Art of Letters—did not deal with syntax. According to Dinneen "In the grammar Thrax dealt with what we would call the phonology and morphology of language. He did not treat syntax." Syntactic relations began to be recognized as the medievals rediscovered Aristotelian logic during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. With the trend called "logicization of grammar," which was an application

27 Dinneen, p. 73.
28 Ibid., p. 78.
29 Ibid., p. 98.
30 Ibid., pp. 125-128.
of logical reasoning to current Latin usage, the development of philo-
osophical or general grammars began in the thirteenth and fourteenth
centuries. General grammars were so designated because of their concen-
tration on the universals of language. Preoccupation with universals
(like the nature of meaning to be assigned to common or universal terms
such as 'man,' 'good,' 'bad,' 'mortal,' etc.) necessitated the study of
words in sentences. And in the process of a shift from the examination
of the abstract meanings of isolated words to concrete expressions in
actual use there arose the need to consider "the speaker as a thinking
subject."31

But the following of Thrax's word-centered approach by subsequent
Greek and Latin grammars had established a tradition of such power that
even eighteen centuries later there was little concern for syntax. G. H.
Vallis says:

Until the latter part of the eighteenth century gram-
marians and writers did not concern themselves with
points of syntax or what we should call usage. The
older 'grammars' were usually divided into four parts,
Orthography, Etymology (i.e., Accidence), Syntax, and
Prosody; among these syntax was apt to take a subordi-
nate place.32

Chomsky, too, says: "Earlier grammars had been largely a grammar of
word classes and inflections."33

However, the first steps toward a sentence grammar were taken appar-
ently in the Port Royal Grammar of 1660 which recognized "the importance

31 Dinneen, p. 128.
32 G. H. Vallis, The Pattern of English (Tonbridge, Kent: Tonbridge
33 Noam Chomsky, Language and Mind (New York: Harcourt, Brace and
of the notion phrase as a grammatical unit." But the image of the sentence as a bipartite predication portrayed in the seventeenth-century philosophical grammar has not been popular exclusively with prescriptive grammarians down to our days. It has been sanctioned by great modern linguists such as Sapir and Chomsky as well. Sapir defines the sentence as "the linguistic expression of a proposition," and thus explains it:

> It combines a subject of discourse with a statement in regard to this subject. Subject and "Predicate" may be combined in a single word, as in Latin 'dico'; each may be expressed independently, as in the English equivalent, 'I say'; each or either may be so qualified as to lead to complex propositions of many sorts. No matter how many of these qualifying elements (words or functional parts of words) are introduced, the sentence does not lose its feeling of unity so long as each and every one of them falls in place as contributory to the definition of either the subject of discourse or the core of the predicate.35

This view is also held in the currently popular generative-transformational grammar, which on the basis of the theory of propositions finds grounds for conceiving of the sentence as a bipartite predication.

But the validity of the traditional concept of the sentence was called to question by the scholarly traditional grammarians, and the (taxonomic) structural linguists who based their concept of the sentence on Antoine Meillet's definition. Meillet defines the sentence thus:

> ... the sentence can be defined as follows: a group of words joined together by grammatical agreements relating devices and which, not grammatically

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34 Chomsky, p. 14.

dependent upon any other group, are complete in themselves. As Hockett says "Meillet's definition is now generally accepted in practice if not always in theoretical discussion." It was this definition that set the example alike for the definitions of the sentence given by scholarly traditional grammarians like Otto Jespersen, and structural linguists like Leonard Bloomfield and Charles Carpenter Fries.

Meillet's contribution resulted in a sense in broadening the scope of the application of the word 'sentence.' Grammarians influenced by Meillet's definition set out to accept as a sentence any utterance independent enough to be a unit of communication. Consequently, complete predication was classed, if as the major favorite sentence, not as the only utterance deserving to be called a sentence. Hockett, for example, says "The kernel of an English sentence of the favorite sentence type is a predicative constituent. This is true also in most other languages and quite possibly in all." And then, following Bloomfield, proceeds to describe the minor sentences, i.e., the non-predicative ones such as subjectless commands, vocatives, the aphoristic type, and the fragment type.

The universality of predication may be traced in English from the earliest Old English writings. G. H. Vallins finds that although owing to the inflective nature of Old English word order in the basic English sentence followed at least three main patterns (i.e., Subject-Verb-Object;

38 Ibid., p. 201.
Verb-Object-Subject; Subject-Object-Verb), the sentence was a predication. During the Middle English Period, as a result of both the loss of the majority of inflections and the influence of French syntax, the order of the words in the basic English sentence was settled on SVO which, occasional stylistic variations aside, is still the pattern of the basic Modern English sentence. Briefly, whatever the word order, the basic English sentence has always been a predication. In Vallins' words:

Apart from word order, the simple sentence is constructed in Modern English precisely as it was in the English of King Alfred's time—that is, it consists of a subject and a predicate. The subject is the person or thing spoken about, and is represented by some form of a noun; the predicate is what is said about it and has as its key-word a finite part, or tense, of a verb.39

Yet, the definition of the English sentence is still far from a settled question. While to some modern grammarians complete predication is only one variety of the sentences spoken and written in English, to others only those utterances are sentences which can be analysed as complete predications. The succeeding chapters examine the concept of the English sentence held by four of these modern grammarians.

CHAPTER II

JESPERSEN'S CONCEPT OF THE SENTENCE

Jespersen finds that from among the numerous and divergent definitions of the sentence, except the "merely bogus definitions in which technical words are used to conceal the want of clear thought,"40 the majority of the definitions stem from either formal, logical or psychological considerations, some of them aiming a reconciliation of two or three of these points of view. However, regardless of the difference of the basis for their concept of the sentence grammarians differ little in distinguishing a sentence from a non-sentence.

Jespersen is equally dissatisfied with the logical analysis of the sentence based on the trinity of Subject, Copula, Predicate, and the analysis based on a 'twoness,' seeking a subject and a predicate in every sentence. His reason is that these criteria do not account for all the English sentences actually employed. Concerning the logical analysis he says "even with regard to their purely intellectual propositions the scheme is artificial and fictitious, and it does not at all fit the great majority of those everyday sentences of a more or less emotional coloring which form the chief subject-matter of the researches of the grammarian."41 And regarding the criterion of subject-predicate, Jespersen briefly identifies the 'subject' and the 'predicate' with respectively the 'primary' and the 'adnex' of an independent 'nexus.' The remainder of his discussion of the sentence

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41 Ibid., pp. 305-306.
is allotted to a concise exemplification of almost all the categories of
the utterances which serve as sentences, though they scarcely fit into the
patterns of the above formal criteria.

He begins with what he calls 'one-member sentences' which may consist
of only one word like 'Come!,' "Splendid!," "What?!," or of two or more
words such as "Come along!," "A capital idea!," "Poor little Ann!," "What
fun!" Obviously, without resort to the theory of ellipsis it is irrelevant
to measure these utterances with the criterion of predication. But Jespersen
almost completely rejects the theory of ellipsis. He seems, in fact, to
deride the grammarians who justify the existence of one-member sentences by
trying to supply the elliptical parts. He says:

An old-fashioned grammarian will feel a certain repugnance to this theory of one-member sentences,
and will be inclined to explain them by his panacea, ellipsis. In "Come!" he will say that the subject
"you" is understood, and in "Splendid!" and "A capital idea!" not only the subject ("this"), but also
the verb "is" is understood.\textsuperscript{42}

But Jespersen construes the one-member sentences differently. He says
"In many exclamations we may . . . look upon what is said as the adnex, the
subject (primary) being either the whole situation or something implied by
the situation."\textsuperscript{43}

To appreciate this explanation we should be familiar with Jespersen's
terms 'adnex' and 'primary.' And a familiarity with Jespersen's theories of
'nexus-junction,' and 'three ranks' is a prerequisite. Briefly, Jespersen
distinguishes two groups of utterances--one group containing a finite verb,

\textsuperscript{42} Jespersen, \textit{Philosophy of Grammar}, p. 306.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
the other group a participle. His famous examples, which have been widely adopted by later linguists, are "the dog barks furiously" which represents the group of utterances containing a finite verb, and "The furiously barking dog" which represents the group of utterances with a participle. He calls the former group "nexus" and the latter "junction." On the other hand, on the basis of the mutual relations as "defined" or "defining" among the words of an utterance, Jespersen distinguishes three ranks. For instance, in "extremely hot weather," the word 'weather' is "primary," 'hot' "secondary," and 'extremely' "tertiary." The words "primary," "secondary," and "tertiary" are applicable to both nexus and junction. Jespersen re-names these ranks, in "junction" as: "superjunct," "adjunct," "subjunct," and in "nexus" as: "supernex," "adnex," "subnex."  

Jespersen cautions grammarians against admitting ellipses "except where they are absolutely necessary and where there can be no doubt as to what is understood." Thus, to use his own examples, it is clear that the elliptical parts in "he is rich but his brother is not," and "it generally costs six shillings but I paid only five" are respectively "rich" and "shillings" at the end of the two utterances. But he is reluctant to agree with grammarians who would analyse the one-word sentences like "Canto" and "Fluit" as containing an implicit subject. And he strictly refuses to believe that utterances such as "Watercresses!," "Special edition!," "I

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44 Jespersen, Philosophy of Grammar, p. 96.
46 Ibid., p. 306.
offer you . . ." "Will you buy . . .?", or "This is . . ." can ever for
certain be supplied with elliptical parts. He says:

If the word "John!" forms a whole utterance, it may
according to circumstances and the tone in which it
is said be interpreted in various ways: "How I love
you, John," "How could you do that?," "I am glad to
see you," "Was it John?, I thought it was Tom," etc.
How can these various "John!"s be reduced to the
scheme subject-predicate, and how can ellipses assist
us in analyzing them?

Jespersen accepts not only "John!" as a sentence, but he does so with-
out reservations any utterance, interjections included, capable of standing
alone as a means of communication. Thus to him

"Yes" and "No," and the interjections like "Alas!"
or "Oh!" or the tongue-clicks inadequately spelt
"Tut" and "Tek" are to all intents and purposes
sentences just as much as the most delicately
balanced sentences ever uttered by Demosthenes or
penned by Samuel Johnson.

It is on the basis of such an assumption that Jespersen, perhaps also
inspired by Meillet's definition, formulates his own definition of the sen-
tence as follows:

A sentence is a (relatively) complete and independent
human utterance—the completeness and independence
being shown by its standing alone or its capability of
standing alone, i.e. of being uttered by itself.

Apparently, this definition and the way Jespersen interprets it has
been of tremendous importance for later linguists who have discussed the
sentence. He explains that he chooses the word "utterance" as the most

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
comprehensive term he finds to mean a piece of communication. And he illustrates the implications of the word "independent" thus:

"She is ill" is a sentence, but if the same words enter into the combination "He thinks (that) she is ill" and "He is sad when (if, because) she is ill," they are no longer independent utterances, but parts of sentences, either as in the first, the object of 'thinks,' or, as in the others, subjuncts (strictly speaking, parts of subjuncts, as the conjunctions are also required)... In the same way, while "What to do?" is a complete sentence when standing alone, it ceases to be one and becomes a mere clause in "He did not know what to do."?

It is also a simple corollary of the definition that when "If only something would happen!" stands alone and means "I wish something would happen," and when "If this isn't the limit!" means "This is the limit," these are (complete) sentences, no matter how easy it is to see that they have developed from clauses requiring some continuation to be complete.51

The similarity between this interpretation of "independence" and, later, Bloomfield's is so striking that it is difficult not to acknowledge Jespersen's precedence in this connection. Perhaps the extent of Jespersen's influence, just in the implications of the term "independent," can be better seen if we consider that it is on the basis of Bloomfield's explanation of the quality of independence (modeled on Jespersen's) that Fries founds his assumptions and begins his research for the isolation of the sentence.

Admitting that his definition conceives of the sentence as "a purely notional category," Jespersen announces that "no particular grammatical form is required for a word or a group of words to be called a sentence.52 As a corollary of such a comprehensive view, unlike many other scholars, Jespersen

51 Jespersen, Philosophy of Grammar, pp. 307-308.
52 Ibid., p. 308.
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does not pay special tribute to what is known as "normal sentence"—the
sentence containing a subject and a finite verb. His reason is that, while
actually different forms of utterances perform the function of the sentence
in English, only one category of English sentences is represented in the
pattern of the 'normal sentences':

Such sentences may be normal in quiet, easy-flowing
unemotional prose, but as soon as speech is affected
by vivid emotion an extensive use is made of sen-
tences which fall outside this normal scheme and yet
have every right to be considered normal and regular
sentences.53

However, his generous application of the term 'sentence' does not
mean that Jespersen seeks the easiest way out of the controversies lurking
in more precise definitions. The point is that he bases his study of the
sentence on observed utterance—a fact he later expressed thus: "My method
is to some extent to be compared with the 'behavioristic' school of psychology,
which rejects introspection and recognizes in the working of the mind only
that which is capable of being measured and weighed in its manifestations in
the material world."54

Jespersen classifies the sentences into:

(1) Inarticulate sentences: "Thanks!" (Thanks very
much | Many thanks) "What?" "Off!"
(2) Semi-articulate sentences: "Thank you!" (Thank
you very much) "What to do?" "Off with his head!"
(3) Articulate sentences: "I thank you!" "What am I
to do?" "You must strike off his head!"55

As this classification indicates, only articulate sentences contain both

53 Jespersen, Philosophy of Grammar, p. 308.
54 Otto Jespersen, "Linguistic Self-Criticism," S.P.E. Tract No. XLVIII
(1937), p. 270.
55 Jespersen, Philosophy of Grammar, p. 308.
parts of independent nexus. In fact with the exception of a minority of "nominal sentences" (not a very common type in English, like 'Not a good thing, government by many' or 'Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,' or 'Needless to say'—in all which cases "the predicate is placed first to which the subject is added as a kind of after thought, but without the verb 'is.'"), the great majority of articulate sentences contain a finite verb. Jespersen's discussion of the articulate sentences unveils the secret of the predominance of the sentences of independent nexus type. Although the majority of English sentences have been of the independent nexus type, according to Jespersen a considerable number of the everyday sentences have gradually been patterned so by analogy:

As most sentences have a subject (Petrus venit), subjects come to be introduced where at first there were none: 'je viens,' 'il vient,' 'il pleut' as against 'venio,' 'venit,' 'pluit,' and in the same way E. 'I come,' 'he comes,' 'it rains.' As most sentences have something placed before the verb, the empty 'there' came to be used in 'there are many,' etc. As most sentences contain a verb, a verb was inserted in places where it was not at first necessary to have one, hence the use of the 'copula' 'is' and of 'does' in "So John does!"

As some verbs generally take a predicative, an empty 'so' (G. 'ses,' Dan. 'det') is used, e.g. in "In France the population is stationary, and in England it is rapidly becoming so," cp. also "To make men happy, and to keep them so" (Pope). As most adjuncts are followed by a primary, "one" is used to prop up the adjunct in "a grey horse instead of the white one" "birds love their young ones," etc. In all these cases we have practically the same tendency to round off sentences so as to make them conform to a prevalent type.  

Hence, Jespersen observes that while this "uniformizing tentency" has not converted all English sentences into independent nexus type, it has

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56 Ibid., pp. 120-122.
57 Ibid., p. 309.
become "the basis of the grammarian's assumption that every sentence, or every normal sentence, must contain a subject and a finite verb." But recognizing that this is "merely a tendency" rather than a law of language, Jespersen finds it "urgent to give a definition of 'sentence' which does not require the presence of those two constituents."58 Thus, far from condemning the utterances that do not conform to the pattern of independent nexus, Jespersen rather convincingly justifies their right of existence, because they are used where only they are appropriate. For instance, to use the example Jespersen himself employs, where "Two third Brighton return" communicates the message and elicits the expected response, it is out of place to say "Would you please sell me two third-class tickets from London to Brighton and back again, and I will pay you the usual fare for such tickets."59

Jespersen discusses such utterances, as well as the compound nouns which are composed of two terms with no clue to the nature of their relation, like 'home life,' 'home letters,' 'sunrise,' 'sunflower,' etc., under what he calls suppressions, of which he says:

As in the structure of compounds, so also in the structure of sentences much is left to the sympathetic imagination of the hearer, and what from the point of view of the trained thinker, or the pedantic schoolmaster, is only part of an utterance, is frequently the only thing said, and the only thing required to make the meaning clear to the hearer. This is especially true of certain types of sentences in which suppressions of the same kind have occurred so often that at last no one thinks of what is left out, the remainder becoming a regular idiomatic expression which the grammarian must recognize as a complete sentence.50

58 Jespersen, Philosophy of Grammar, p. 309.
60 Ibid., p. 310.
Jespersen recognizes two main kinds of suppressions: (1) 'Prosoposis,' the suppression which causes the initial syllables, or often whole words beginning the sentence, to remain unarticulated or inaudible. Sometimes this becomes a regular speech habit, especially in the case of certain set phrases; consequently, for instance "Good morning" is heard as "morning," "God bless you" as "Bless you," "I shall see you" as "See you," etc. (2) 'apoposis,' the suppression of the end of the sentence, in which case the speaker does not try to finish his speech either because he wonders which word to use or because he decides that there is no need to continue. For instance, after he says "If only something would happen," he does not try to complete it by adding, for example, "I should be happy" or "it would be better," or "things would be tolerable" or whatever he might want to add. Jespersen does not hesitate to call the suppressed utterance a complete sentence. He says "In all such cases the fact that something is left out should not prevent us from recognizing the utterance as sufficiently complete to be called a sentence."  

However, Jespersen does not recognize as sentences: signboards ("J.C. Mason, Bookseller") book-titles ("Men and Women"), head-lines in newspapers ("New Conferences in Paris" or "Killed his father-in-law"), indication of speakers in plays ("Hamlet"), entries in diaries ("Tuesday. Rain and fog. Chess with uncle Tom, walk with the girls") and similar short expressions.  

The main reason for his denying the name 'sentence' to these expressions
is that "all these phenomena occur in writing only and thus fall outside language proper: spoken language may indulge in many suppressions but the result is always distinguished from that exemplified in the above quotation."

Jespersen ends his discussion of the sentence by a reference to another type of suppressed sentence. The suppressed part here is the verb. Jespersen indicates that quite contrary to what might be expected, verbs, "hustling and fussy" as they may be, when suppressed instead of causing impression of 'calm,' intensify the impression of unrest, as for example in:

Then rapidly to the door, down the steps, out into the street, and without looking to right or left into the automobile, and in three minutes to Wall Street with utter disregard of police regulations and speed limits.

or as in Longfellow's description of Paul Revere's ride:

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet.

Similarly, Jespersen also observes that the feeling of terseness and vigor in a large number of "proverbial locutions, apophthegms, party devices and similar sayings" result from the omission of the verb, as in "Every man to his taste," "Once a clergyman, always a clergyman," "Least said, soonest mended," "One man, one vote," etc. As Jespersen explains, in these and similar sayings "the impression of hurry or of stress of business which does not allow time enough to round off one's sentences in the usual way," is created by omitting what may seem superfluous.

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65 Jespersen, Philosophy of Grammar, p. 311.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., pp. 311-312.
Of course there are proverbs which contain verbs, like "Live and learn," "Rule a wife and have a wife," "Spare the rod and spoil the child," "Love me, love my dog," and yet they are terse and easy to remember. The reason is that both in the case of verbless sayings, and those with verbs, the structure of the sentence is not the usual one of subject and finite verb. Jespersen compares this deviation to "a Japanese drawing, in which the contours are not completely filled in." Just as the boldness of the drawing by leaving freedom for the imagination of the beholder helps to create deeper artistic effect, these sayings by abandoning the usual pattern of the so-called normal sentences communicate more than they otherwise might.

Everywhere in his discussion of the sentence, instead of condemning this and prescribing that, Jespersen regards the sentence as a truth able to abide in a variety of bodies of utterances, as long as they are independent enough to house it. And far from attributing superiority to the 'normal' and inferiority to the 'suppressed' sentence, he sees them as embodiments of the universal tendencies of classicism and impressionism in language. And thus he concludes his discussion on the sentence: "Our grammatical phenomenon thus turns out to be one little part of the ever-standing war between classicism and impressionism." 69

68 Jespersen, Philosophy of Grammar, p. 311.
69 Ibid., p. 312.
CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF THE SENTENCE HELD BY BLOOMFIELD AND FRIES

It is not an exaggeration to say that with Bloomfield the question of the 'sentence' is to decide whether the bipartite sentence is the only utterance deserving the name 'sentence' or if it is only one variety of the utterances used as the unit of speech in English. In five of the works in which Bloomfield deals with 'the sentence,' he seems to be moving from a popular, formal concept to a more comprehensive and informal one.

Bloomfield's concept of the sentence in his first book is almost the popular concept of the sentence as a complete bipartite predication. He says "the analysis of a total experience always proceeds by single binary divisions." Thus it seems that he accepts that (a) a sentence is a 'whole'—"a total experience," and (b) a sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. In his own words "In English at least two words are needed to express a predication: a subject and a predicate."

In this early work, Bloomfield seems to hold that this concept of the sentence, i.e., a bipartite predication, usually consisting of an actor and its action is the universal form of the English sentence. Thus, he says, "The concrete relation of an actor performing an action has in English furnished the universal form for the sentence." And apparently, he defends it against possible objections by explaining that in English the subject-predicate relationship is only popularly equated with actor-action

71 Ibid., p. 169.
72 Ibid., p. 115.
relationship. Obviously this identification of the subject with the actor and the predicate with the action is purely a matter of form. Bloomfield clarifies this point by an example of the superficial actor-action relationship created in instances where the subject is the 'undegoer' rather than the 'actor' of the action. He says, "when, for instance, the subject is not an actor but the goal (object-affected) of an action, we make it actor-subject of the abstract verb 'is' and use in the predicate a verbal adjective denoting the quality of something that has undergone an action. Thus we say 'He is hurt,' 'The rabbit was killed,' 'The house is being built.'\(^73\)

Bloomfield holds this view of the sentence in his "Sentence and Word," too. Here his aim is to prove the primacy of the 'sentence' over the 'word.' He says, "The first and original datum of language is the sentence,"\(^74\) and in passing suggests an improvement of Kretschmer's definition of the sentence thus: "The sentence is the linguistic expression of an affect involving a single total experience"; and hints that "every sentence is a unit,"\(^75\) and that "the sentences which a speaker may utter are not confined to those which he has actually heard before, but may consist of entirely new combinations of the habitual speech elements."\(^76\)

But in this paper Bloomfield begins to question the universality of the bipartite sentence. He says, "It is interesting to notice that the

\(^{73}\) Bloomfield, Introduction to the Study of Language, p. 115.


\(^{75}\) Ibid., p. 64.

\(^{76}\) Ibid., p. 65.
first and most important division which logical reflection has always
demanded of the sentence, namely, that into subject and predicate, is one
of the rarest, and, where we know the history, one of the latest, to re-
ceive a corresponding word-division in the sentence." And in his sub-
sequent works, concerning the sentence, i.e., in his "Subject and Predi-
cate," "Review of Ries," and Language he sets out to refute the univer-
sality of the predicative sentence and describe sentence-types. However,
finally, inspired by Meillet's definition and Jespersen's method, he
defines the sentence.

In his "Subject and Predicate" Bloomfield clarifies the nature of
the subject and the predicate. Here he finds that both from the point of
speech-feeling, and actually "the prevalent view . . . that 'every sen-
tence contains two parts, a subject and a predicate'" is without a
foundation. And rejects the usual interpretations that utterances like
'Ouch!', 'Fire!' and 'Yes,' are sentences with unexpressed parts. The
reason for this rejection is that, in accordance with James's psychology
"the mental phenomena must be viewed as they actually occur and not as
their products or record of their occurrence may be interpreted by an
observer after the fact." Consequently, Bloomfield states that dividing
the Latin 'contat' and even the English 'She is singing' into a subject

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77 Ibid., p. 67.
78 Leonard Bloomfield, "Subject and Predicate" in A Leonard Bloom-
field Anthology, ed. by Charles F. Hockett (Bloomington: Indiana Uni-
79 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
and a predicate is wrong because "the speaker's experience is simply that of a known and definite person's singing." Hence, division of such utterances into subject and predicate can arise only from association of these forms with logical propositions.

Concerning predication, Bloomfield admits that predication is one of the sentence-types in English, but he warns against confusing the logical subject and predicate with grammatical or linguistic subject and predicate. He says,

It is a natural transference of terms—but we must not forget that it is a transference of terms—to call the linguistic element corresponding to the logical subject a grammatical or linguistic 'subject' and to speak similarly of a grammatical or linguistic 'predicate.'

However, according to Bloomfield this sentence-type has received excessive attention, in which regard, somewhat reproachfully, he says,

A student confronted by the task of analyzing his speech enters into a state of abnormally careful attention; this attention he exercises not only in the analysis, but also, inappropriately, in forming his examples, which, in consequence are logically constructed statements . . . rather than casual phrases.

Bloomfield exemplifies this equation of language with logic by the predicative sentence "He is a lucky fellow," and says that "with a different distribution of pause, duration, pitch, and stress [we may] utter it not as the expression of a deliberate judgment, but as an enthusiastic exclamation, 'he's a lucky fellow!' or we may half plaintively, half enviously mutter, 'he's a lucky fellow!' In these instances the speaker's frame of mind is far removed from that of logical predication."
However, judged by the criterion Bloomfield himself offers, i.e. on the basis of the uttered sentence itself,° this is a predication. Bloomfield admits this. Moreover, he acknowledges the completeness which goes with a complete predication:

Although our ejaculation of wonder or envy differs in accentual features from the calm judgment, 'he is a lucky fellow,' the two utterances are the same so far as distinctive word-form is concerned; and, what is moreover, the casual ejaculation is accompanied by a peculiar feeling-tone, a subtle and indescribable sense of completeness or roundedness, whose presence we are wont to signal by calling the statement a 'complete predication' or a 'complete sentence.' This appears clearly when we contrast 'he's a lucky fellow!' with the otherwise equivalent 'lucky fellow!' which lacks this tone of completeness.°

Consequently, Bloomfield seems to allow that the terms 'subject' and 'predicate' if properly employed need not be linguistic taboos:

If we wish to keep the terms 'linguistic subject' and 'linguistic predicate,' we must define them not straightway as linguistic expressions of a logical subject and predicate, but rather as 'linguistic elements which can be used in this function, but are used also in other utterances, as components of a habitual sentence-type.°

Further, concerning the permissibility or rather incumbency of the extension of the terms 'subject' and 'predicate' to the parts of a bipartite predicational sentence, Bloomfield says:

... it is a fundamental principle of linguistic study that we have no right to inject into our analysis of a language distinctions not expressed in the language. If therefore, we borrow the technical terms 'subject' and 'predicate' from

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°Ibid., p. 71.

°°Ibid., p. 72.

°°°Ibid., p. 73.
logic for such a sentence as 'man is mortal,' we are bound to keep them also for the structurally similar 'Mary bought a hat,' and consequently to distinguish between the use of these terms in logic and their use in linguistics.86

However, there is a reason for the structuralists' mistrust of the terms 'subject' and 'predicate.' It is the identification of the logical and linguistic subject and predicate. The fact is that the logical and linguistic subject and predicate do not necessarily coincide. Bloomfield illustrates this point thus:

If I say, 'The hat was priced at five dollars. A woman went in and bought it,' my second sentence under logical interpretation, would present a poorly chosen subject, for it is the hat and not the unknown woman that ought, logically, to be the subject of the new statement; I should say: 'The hat was priced at five dollars. It was bought by a woman who had entered the store in order to buy it.' This deviation of linguistic subject and predicate from a logical norm is . . . not . . . a rare or occasional feature, but will be found extremely common in our languages.87

In his "Review of Ries" Bloomfield speaks of the term 'sentence' as "the semi-popular (in origin, philosophic-scholastic) term," and calling involvement in trying to give a scientific definition of the sentence an engagement in a "pseudo-problem," states that "we are under no obligation to adopt or redefine popular terms or bother with them at all."88 Here he is convinced that Ries' insistence that (1) the sentence be defined scientifically, (2) the term 'sentence' be used only as a scientific term

86 Ibid., p. 73.
87 Ibid., p. 74.
is illogical because, to Bloomfield: "(1) may be impossible or inept and,... (2) is merely a question of taste." Consequently, rejecting Ries's definition of the sentence (i.e., 'A sentence is a grammatically constructed minimum unit of speech which expresses its content with respect to the latter's relation to reality.') as "largely philosophic-psychologic," Bloomfield takes preparatory steps toward description of the linguistic forms that can perform the function of a sentence. These steps consist of describing (1) the simple forms or morphemes which are minimum meaningful forms like, 'boy,' 'yes,' '-ish,' (2) complex forms which contain two or more 'included forms' and follow only a limited number of patterns consisting of features like the selection of the included forms—a selection by which, for instance, 'doggish' and 'manly' are accepted, and '*horse-ish' and '*boy-ly' are rejected, or the selection determining the order of the included forms which rejects '*ish-boy' or '*boy good', also the features of congruence, government, etc. Bloomfield calls these patterns 'constructions.' (3) bound forms such as '-ish' or '-ly' (4) free forms or words.

Whether simple or complex, only free forms have the potential of being sentences. When these free forms comprise the stretch of an actual speech-utterance we have a 'sentence' which if it consists of a verb like 'Come!' or contains a verb like 'He came,' is a favorite English sentence form, with "a meaning which may be roughly defined as 'complete and novel' (observation, instruction, etc.)." Otherwise it is a non-favorite

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89 Ibid., p. 232.
90 Ibid., p. 233.
91 Ibid., p. 234.
sentence form which may express: intense stimulus like 'Ouch!', decision on earlier speech like 'Yes!', 'No!', or supplementation of earlier speech like 'tomorrow.' Bloomfield discusses his classification of sentences into 'favorite' and 'minor' in detail in his *Language*.

Chapter eleven of *Language* contains Bloomfield's final statement on the 'sentence.' Here he seems to expand on the view (inspired by Meillet's definition) that a sentence is an independent 'largest-form.' Thus, if it is not in an 'included position' such as 'John ran away,' in an 'absolute position' 'John!' constitutes a sentence.

Bloomfield classifies the English sentences (a) by their ending modulation, and (b) on the basis of their features of selection.

(a) He finds that on account of the secondary phonemes of pitch there are three main sentence-types in English: (1) Statements, sentences which end with falling pitch, like 'John ran away'; (2) Questions, sentences which end with rising pitch, like 'John ran away?'; (3) Supplement questions, sentences ending with lesser rising pitch, like 'Who ran away?' Bloomfield observes that when the pitch of exclamation is added to these three, the number of English sentence-type totals to six.92

(b) Structurally, he see two sentence-types (1) 'full sentences' and (2) 'minor sentences.' Bloomfield differentiates these types thus:

The difference consists in a taxeme of selection: certain forms are 'favorite sentence-forms'; when a favorite sentence-form is used as a sentence, this is a full sentence, and when any other form is used as a sentence, this is a minor sentence.

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In English we have two favorite sentence-forms. One consists of 'actor-action' phrases—phrases whose structure is that of the actor-action construction: 'John ran away.' 'Who ran away?' 'Did John ran away?' The other consists of a 'command'—an infinitive verb with or without modifiers: 'Come!' 'Be good!' This second type is always spoken with exclamatory sentence pitch; the infinitive may be accompanied by the word 'you' as an actor: 'You be good!' As these examples show the meaning of full sentence-type is something like 'complete and novel utterance'—that is, the speaker implies that what he says is full-sized occurrence or instruction, and that it somehow alters the hearer's situation.

(2) Any free form other than the two full sentence-types (i.e. 'actor-action' and 'command') which is used as a sentence is a minor sentence. Thus, even interjections can be sentences. However Bloomfield divides minor sentences into two groups: (a) "the 'completive' type consists of a form which merely supplements a situation—that is, an earlier speech, a gesture, or the mere presence of an object: 'This one.' 'Tomorrow morning.' 'Gladly, if I can.' 'Whenever you're ready.' 'Here.' 'When?' 'With whom?' 'Mr. Brown: Mr. Smith' (in introducing people). 'Drugs.' 'State Street.' They occur especially as answers to questions; for this use we have the special completive, 'yes' and 'no.'" (b) The 'exclamatory' type which occurs under a violent stimulus. It consists of interjections or other forms not belonging to favorite sentence-types, and often shows parataxis: 'Ouch, damn it!' 'This way please!' This type is also used at calling a person: 'John, little boy!' 'You with glasses!'

An independent group of minor sentences includes some of the aphoristic utterances: 'The more, the merrier.' 'First come, first served.' 'Old

93 Ibid., p. 172.
94 Ibid., pp. 176-177.
To summarize Bloomfield's concept, a 'free form' in an 'absolute position' may be a sentence. This generalization seems to be supportable if we notice Bloomfield's wondering whether 'the,' 'a,' 'is,' and 'and' are ever spoken alone. If they are, they will have the potential of being sentences. And this seems quite possible to Bloomfield:

One can imagine a dialogue: 'Is?'—'No; was.' The word 'because' is said to be a woman's answer. An impatient listener says 'And?' We can imagine a hesitant speaker who says 'The . . . ' and is understood by his hearers.95

Inspired by Meillet for his interest in 'free forms,' and enlightened by Jespersen in his explanation of the 'included position' and 'absolute position,' Bloomfield thus defines the sentence:

. . . each sentence is an independent linguistic form, not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form.97

In The Structure of English Fries aims at presenting a description of the structure of English, unbiased by popular concepts of traditional grammar.

He asks "What is a sentence?" and proceeds to find an answer by first an attempt at disproving the validity of the traditional criteria of 'complete thought' and 'subject-predicate,' and then by describing the structure of the sentences he deals with, in his study of an over 250,000-word recorded conversation.

95 Bloomfield, Language, pp. 176-177.
96 Ibid., p. 179.
97 Ibid., p. 170.
First he criticises the definitions based on Thrax's definition. He says the definition "A sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought" does not provide us with a workable criterion because in practice we do not mark off the sentences by examining each sentence for the "complete thought" it is supposed to contain. Even a conscious effort to mark the sentences in this way will not have definite results because "teachers have never succeeded in agreeing upon a set of criteria to determine just what and how much can be put into a word-group punctuated as a single sentence."98

Behind the criterion of 'complete thought' Fries finds the language teacher's and the grammarian's concentration on "the rhetorical sentences of written composition rather than the grammatical sentences of living speech." Since writing tends of necessity to be more clearly stated than speech, teachers to provide students with guides to clear writing, "have turned to the theoretical discussions of the sentence as these have appeared in grammars and in the books that have dealt with the definitions of the sentence unit."99 But Fries finds 'complete thought' immeasurable and too vague to be a reliable criterion for sentence recognition. His wondering "how much must one know in order to have a 'complete' meaning" is not answered by Alfred D. Sheffield's explanation that:

A "complete" thought, or what we may call a 'sentence-thought' is . . . any idea or group of ideas that is felt as answering to one impulse of attention. Not the amount of meaning but its being felt as 'directed'

98 Fries, Structure of English, p. 11.
99 Ibid., p. 12.
is what makes it complete . . . . The only limit
to the possible length of the sentence is the number
of ideas that can be grasped in their relations in
one act of attention.¹⁰⁰

Nor is Fries content with the definitions based on the constituent
parts of the sentence, i.e., the 'subject' and the 'predicate.' For instance,
he disagrees with Russell H. Barker who holds that:

Two elements are necessary to the expression of a
complete thought: (1) a subject which names a per-
son or thing or idea about which a statement is
made; and (2) a predicate which makes a statement
about the subject.¹⁰¹

His reason is that presence of these elements does not provide a basis for
discrimination of a sentence from a non-sentence. He illustrates his view
in this connection by employing Jespersen's examples of 'nexus' and 'junction:'

A situation such as that in which a dog is making
the noise called 'barking' can be expressed by the
utterance 'the dog is barking.' This expression we
accept as a sentence. It fulfills the criteria indi-
cated above—the word 'dog' represents an animal,
the word 'barking' an action, and the action is
attributed to the dog as performer. But the word-
group 'the barking dog,' expressing the same situa-
tion, also contains all the indicated criteria. An
animal is named, the 'dog'; an action, 'barking,'
is ascribed to this animal, the dog, as performer.
Nothing in the criteria contained in the definition
above will serve to guide us to accept 'the dog is
barking' as a sentence, and to exclude 'the barking
dog' as a nonsentence.¹⁰²

Fries uses this occasion also to attack the theory of ellipsis. He
says that to expect the presence of a subject and a predicate in each sen-
tence would be denying the application of the term 'sentence' to requests

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 13. Fries quotes Alfred D. Sheffield, Command of Sen-
¹⁰¹ Fries, p. 15. Fries quotes Russell H. Barker, The Sentence
¹⁰² Ibid., p. 15.
and commands. For instance, he rejects the idea that in "Wait a minute" the subject 'you' is understood. In this case, he says, "many other expressions must be accepted as sentences." Besides, there will be no limit to the number and the nature of the words that may be "understood." Hence, he concludes that "these definitions as they stand do not furnish all the criteria needed nor all that are actually used in practice by teachers in schools to determine whether any particular collection of words is a sentence." 103

Thus, on the one hand convinced that it is "impossible . . . to describe the requirements of English sentences in terms of meaning content" 104 and on the other, questioning the reliability as criteria, for defining sentences, of the idea that "every sentence must have a word representing a person, place or thing, and a word 'asserting' or 'saying something' about that person, place, or thing," 105 Fries turns to the physical aspect of the sentence. And finds that it is on the basis of 'form' that a sentence is distinguishable from a nonsentence utterance possessing the same content. To illustrate the function of 'form,' Fries again employs Jespersen's examples of 'nexus' and 'junction.' And accordingly finds that what distinguishes "the dog is barking" as a sentence from "the barking dog," a nonsentence, is that the former "can occur alone as a separate utterance" while the latter always occurs as a part of a larger expression like "the barking dog protected the house," or as an answer to a question.

103 Ibid., p. 17.
104 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
like "What frightened the burglar away?" Hence, he concludes that "The characteristic which distinguishes those expressions which occur only as parts of larger units are not matters of content or meaning, but matters of form." This is the same quality of independence which Meillet and following him Jespersen and Bloomfield made the basis of their definition of the sentence. And concerning its universality Fries says:

The one thing in which languages do agree is the fact that, in all the languages which we know, there are utterances which stand alone, that are separate from other utterances, that occur with silence before and after the utterance.

But Fries goes beyond mere recognition of this fact, and proceeds to isolate the sentence and to describe its structure. His first step is to settle upon "some unit of talk that could be marked off with no uncertainty." He finds "those chunks of talk that are marked off by a shift of speaker" with the needed characteristics and calls them the "utterance units." But as his examination of the recorded conversation reveals, these utterance units are of great variety of length and form. However, he assumes that "each utterance if not interrupted must be one of the following: 1. A single minimum free utterance. 2. A single free utterance, but expanded, not minimum. 3. A sequence of two or more free utterances." And on this assumption he formulates his general definition of the sentence, thus:

... a sentence ... is a single free utterance, minimum or expanded; ... it is "free" in the sense that it is not included in any larger structure by means of any grammatical device.

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106 Ibid., p. 19.
107 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
108 Ibid., p. 23.
109 Ibid., p. 25.
As a result of repeated examination of these utterances, he further groups the utterances into those that 'begin' the conversation and those that are uttered as 'response,' and calls the former "situation utterance units" and the latter "response utterance units." Further, "by a long process of comparing each utterance unit with many of the others, 'seeking recurrent partials,'"110 in the "situation utterance units," he succeeds in isolating the single free utterance. He also finds that many of the "response utterance units" fit the patterns of the "situation utterance units" but many do not.

Fries makes a third type of classification of the utterances on the basis of the responses that follow them. Thus he finds free utterances to be:

'Communicative utterances'

I. Utterances regularly eliciting "oral" responses only:
   A. 'Greetings.' B. 'Calls.' C. 'Questions'

II. Utterances regularly eliciting "action" responses, sometimes accompanied by one of a limited list of oral responses: 'requests' or 'commands.'

III. Utterances regularly eliciting conventional signals of attention to continuous discourse (sometimes oral signals, but of a limited list, unpredictable in place, and not interrupting the span of talk or utterance unit): 'statements.'

'Noncommunicative utterances'

Utterances characteristic of situations such as surprise, sudden pain, prolonged pain, disgust, anger, laughter, sorrow.111

So far Fries's researches revolve around his interpretation of the sentence classes. Next he investigates whether "a sentence is a group of words." He notices that without the cooperation of "structural meaning,"

110 Fries, p. 39.
111 Ibid., p. 53.
"lexical meaning" cannot account for the meaning of a sentence, because the total linguistic meaning of any utterance consists of the lexical meanings of the separate words plus . . . structural meanings."112 As Fries points out, this is quite different from the assumptions of traditional grammar based on lexical meaning. Fries illustrates this point by comparing an analysis of a sentence first in the traditional way, and then in accordance with structural grammar. Concerning traditional analysis he says:

In the usual approach to the grammatical analysis of sentences one must know the total meaning of the utterance before beginning any analysis. The process of analysis consists almost wholly of giving technical names to portions of this total meaning. For example, given the sentence 'the man gave the boy the money,' the conventional grammatical analysis would consist in attaching the name "subject" to the word 'man,' the name "predicate" to the word 'gave,' the name "indirect object" to the word 'boy,' the name "direct object" to the word 'money,' and the name "declarative sentence" to the whole utterance. If pressed for the basis upon which these names are given to these words, one would, in accord with the traditional method, say that the word 'man' is called "subject" because it "designates the person about whom an assertion is made"; that the word 'gave' is called "predicate" because it is "the word that asserts something about the subject"; that the word 'boy' is called "indirect object" because it "indicates the person to or for whom the action is done"; and that the word 'money' is called "direct object" because it "indicates the thing that receives the action of the verb." The sentence is called a "declarative sentence" because it "makes a statement." The whole procedure begins with the total meaning of the sentence and consists solely in ascribing the technical terms "subject," "predicate," "indirect object," "direct object," and "declarative sentence" to certain parts of that meaning.113

And regarding structural analysis Fries says:

First of all, we need to distinguish sharply at least two kinds of meaning in the total meaning of this

112 Fries, p. 56.
113 Ibid., pp. 54-55.
utterance. There are, for example, the meanings of the separate words as the dictionary would record them—the lexical meanings. The dictionary would tell us something of the kinds of creatures referred to by the words 'man' and 'boy;' it would tell us the kind of action indicated by the word 'gave.' Beyond these meanings the dictionary does not go. And yet we get from this sentence a whole range of meanings not expressed in the lexical records of the words themselves. We are told, for example, that the "man" performed the action, not the "boy;" we are told that the action has already taken place, it is not something in process, not something planned for the future; the information is given to us as a statement of fact, not something that is questioned, nor something that is requested. Such meanings constitute what we shall call the 'structural meanings' of the sentence. The total linguistic meaning of any utterance consists of the lexical meanings of the separate words plus such structural meanings.\(^\text{114}\)

Consequently, Fries arrives at two basic assumptions: (1) "that all the structural signals in English are strictly formal matters that can be described in physical terms of forms, correlations of these forms, and arrangements of order." (2) "that the formal signals of structural meanings operate in a system—that is, that the items of form and arrangement have signalling significance only as they are parts of patterns in a structural whole."\(^\text{115}\) Hence, he concludes that:

An English sentence is not a group of words as words but rather a structure made up of form-classes or parts of speech.\(^\text{116}\)

This definition encodes the result of Fries's detailed researches concerning the structure of the English sentence, and lays the foundation of his classification of the parts of speech, (of which he finds four:

\(^\text{114}\) Ibid., pp. 55-56.
\(^\text{115}\) Ibid., pp. 58-59.
\(^\text{116}\) Ibid., p. 64.
Class 1, Class 2, Class 3 and Class 4, and a class comprising fifteen groups of "function words," from A to 0), on the basis of function alone. He rejects the traditional classification of parts of speech on the grounds that they are inaccurate and fail to provide consistent description. For example, it defines "a noun" as "the name of a person, place or thing," according to which 'blue,' 'yellow,' 'red' (as names of colors) are "nouns," but in constructions like 'a blue tie,' 'a yellow rose,' 'a red dress' they are not "nouns." Moreover, traditional classification employs mixed criteria of description. For instance, it defines a noun on the basis of its meaning, but an "adjective" on the basis of its function as "A word that modifies a noun or a pronoun." 117

Fries, in a sense, solves this problem by classifying the words on the basis of their function alone. And he justifies the reliability of function as a criterion by classifying nonsense words in sentences nonsensical, except for their grammatical frame, such as:

Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
  Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
  And the mome raths outgrabe . . . .

in which nonsensical words appear "to have clearly definable meaning content." 118 only because of their grammatical frame. Or in the following nonsensical sentences

Woggles uggged diggles
Uggs weggled diggs
Woggs diggled uggles

117 Fries, p. 67.
118 Ibid., p. 70.
where the nonsense words on account of their position and form build grammatical sentences. It is with the application of the criteria of position and form in the matrix of single free utterances (i.e., sentences) that Fries classifies the parts of speech.

Fries shows that the three kinds of sentences, i.e., 'questions,' 'requests,' and 'statements' result from special arrangements of Class 1 and Class 2 words of his classification of parts of speech. The "structural signals," which determine the type of the sentence, are within the sentence itself." This is true of 'situation utterances.' But as for 'response utterances,' "the structural meanings in answers to questions cannot be grasped from the formal arrangements in the answer utterances alone. The question itself, the preceding utterance that elicits the answer response, is an essential part of the linguistic frame through which the answer response, signals its structural meaning."119

No doubt, Fries's approach is valuable in many respects, though a closer examination of his discussions may reveal that, where basic facts are concerned, his description of the sentence, except for difference of terminology, coincides with the traditional description. For instance, where he defines the "subject" as "... simply the Class 1 word (or words) that is tied with a Class 2 word to form the basic pattern of the sentence,"120 he is talking about 'predication.' However, it is generally true that (taxonomic) structural linguists do not conceive of the sentence as only one kind of utterance. To them every grammatically independent utterance is a sentence.

119 Fries, Structure of English, p. 172.
120 Ibid., p. 176.
CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPT OF THE SENTENCE FROM CHOMSKY'S POINT OF VIEW

Generative-transformational grammar (g-t grammar henceforward) is concerned with the rules and regularities in language which generate and transform the sentences. In other words, the grammar initiated by Chomsky, by means of the rules derived from the language ability of the native speaker, describes how sentences are made (generated) and changed (transformed) into other varieties like interrogative sentences, negative sentences, passive sentences, etc. Concerning the importance of these rules it should suffice to consider that knowledge of language generally means the unconscious knowledge of these rules of sentence production which man internalizes before he is six.

Thus g-t grammar begins with the cognisance that language is made of sentences. Chomsky "consider a 'language' to be a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements." He further says that languages, hence sentences, ultimately consist of sequences of phonemes which all may not be grammatical. Thus, evidently, g-t grammar has a definite concept of the sentence. Chomsky assumes that "certain sequences of phonemes are definitely sentences . . . and certain other sequences are definitely non-sentences." Chomsky holds that "the fundamental aim in the linguistic analysis of a language L is to separate the 'grammatical' sequences which are the sentences of L from the 'ungrammatical' sequences which are not sentences of L and to study the structure of the grammatical sequences."

123 Ibid., p. 13.
The degree of grammaticalness of the sentence in $g$-$t$ grammar is, in the first place, measured by its acceptability to the native speaker. Chomsky clarifies that this grammaticalness is neither to be identified with "meaningful" or "significant" in any semantic sense, nor is it equivalent to having a high degree of occurrence. Chomsky's point concerning the independence of the idea of grammaticalness from both semantic meaningfulness and statistical high order of frequency becomes clear when we ask a native speaker of English to read utterances like the following examples, employed by Chomsky, which are semantically nonsensical and statistically of zero frequency:

(1) Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.
(2) Furiously sleep ideas green colorless.

The native speaker will read (1) with normal sentence intonation (i.e., he accepts it as a grammatical sentence), but he will read (2) with the intonation pattern of a sequence of unrelated words. \(^{125}\)

At his second step in testing grammars in search of an appropriate grammar for generating English sentences, Chomsky examines the suitability

\[^{124}\]
Chomsky, Syntactic Structures, p. 15.

\[^{125}\]
Ibid., pp. 15-16.
of the Immediate Constituent analysis, and gives his basic formula of the sentence: \( S \rightarrow NP + VP \) which reads: rewrite sentence as noun-phrase plus verb-phrase. In other words, a sentence consists of a noun-phrase and a verb-phrase. This seems to be the earliest and the only clearly stated definition of the sentence in g-t grammar.

Although they "consider a 'language' to be a set . . . of sentences," and by grammar "[they] mean simply a system of rules that . . . assigns structural descriptions to sentences," and though they believe that "one of the notions that must be defined in general linguistic theory is 'sentence in L,'" g-t grammarians do not go beyond the formula

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126 Discussed by structural linguists, Immediate Constituent Analysis is apparently a more refined version of the traditional analysis of the sentence into subject and predicate and further analysis of clauses and phrases. The idea of Immediate Constituent analysis is traceable to the Roman grammarian Marcus Terentius Varro (a contemporary of Dionysius Thrax) who "looked for . . . binary oppositions exactly in the same way as the linguist does in establishing the immediate constituents of constructions [Fineen, p. 11]." Structural linguists refined it to trace the constituents down to unanalyzable morphemes; and g-t grammar re-named it Phrase Structure Grammar. John Lyons says "There is nothing revolutionary in this notion of constituent structure. It has its equivalent in traditional grammar. But it is only recently that linguists have attempted to handle it within a system of generative rules [John Lyons, "Structural Organisation of Language," in Linguistics at Large, ed. by Noel Minnis (New York, 1971), p. 58]." For an illustration of the explanatory power of Phrase Structure Grammar as a result of the assignment of labels to constituents, see Robert B. Lees, "Transformational Grammar and the Fries Framework," in Readings in Applied English Linguistics, ed. by Harold B. Allen (2nd. ed. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), pp. 140-141.


128 Chomsky, Syntactic Structure, p. 55.
They actually seem to hold that there is no need to define the sentence. For instance, in addition to stating that it is unnecessary to define the sentence, Robert B. Lees finds it almost impossible. He says, "If we already knew how to define 'grammatical sentence of English' there would be no earthly reason for trying to formulate a theory of English sentences, i.e., an English grammar." Similarly, Paul Roberts says, "We cannot define the concept 'sentence in English' short of describing English grammar." H. A. Gleason, too, states that "The sentence is probably undefinable, short of a very extensive set of statements—a whole grammar in fact." And since, he believes, 'sentence' is one of those grammatical concepts which cannot be defined easily, it seems to him "best to abandon the attempt, and to apply the effort to more promising endeavors." However, as far as this study is concerned, g-t grammar does define the sentence. It is the first phrase structure rule formulated by Chomsky, i.e., \( S \rightarrow \text{NP} + \text{VP} \), which becomes the foundation of all varieties of sentences. This fact has found clearer expression in some later works in g-t grammar. For instance, Jane Ervin convinced that "the basic unit

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of communication is the 'sentence," and sharing with Chomsky the view that the core of language is formed of a small group of "simple, active, declarative" sentences called "kernel" sentences from which "the most complex and sophisticated sentence patterns"132 are generated, defines the English sentence thus: "The simplest kernel sentence of the English language, from which all other sentences may be developed, consists of a 'subject' and a 'predicate.'"133 And recognizing the fact that not virtually all English sentences conform to the subject-predicate pattern, Ervin seems to justify g-t grammar's concentration on the grammatical sentences of subject-predicate pattern on the grounds that g-t grammar mainly deals with the written language which because it has no access to suprasegmentals tends to reflect "the fundamentals or rules intrinsic to language"134 more fully.

It is noteworthy that this concept of the sentence is actually identical with that of traditional school grammar which holds that a sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. In fact Chomsky does compare the concept of the simple sentence in traditional grammar with that in g-t grammar, and finds that "the information presented in traditional grammar concerning the analysis of the simple simple sentence is, without question, substantially correct and is essential to any account of how the language is used or acquired." However, there is an important difference between traditional and g-t grammar in the way of description. While traditional

133 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
134 Ibid., p. 16.
grammar lacks the consistent theoretical system to account for usage and acquisition of language, g-t grammar has answers to "how information of this sort can be formally presented in a structural description, and how such structural descriptions can be generated by a system of explicit rules."\(^{135}\)

The controversial question of "You" as the subject of an imperative sentence may serve as a suitable example for illustrating the descriptive and explanatory power prerogative of g-t grammar. As we saw, Jespersen, the iconoclastic scholarly traditionalist of behavioristic taste, as well as Bloomfield and Fries, the champions of (taxonomic) structural linguistics reject the idea of the elliptical subject "You" in imperative sentences. But g-t grammar not only agrees with traditional grammar on the existence of the implicit subject "You" in imperative sentences; it also offers a convincing explanation in its defense. According to Lees, who discusses a suggestion by E. S. Klima, imperative sentences may be conceived of as having been derived from "a model sentence in 'will.'"\(^{136}\) Thus an imperative sentence such as 'Close the door' may have been derived from a sentence like "You will close the door," through two grammatical transformations deleting respectively "will" and "you:"

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{You will close the door} & \rightarrow \text{You close the door.} \\
\text{You close the door} & \rightarrow \text{Close the door.}
\end{align*}
\]

The test of correctness of this explanation is that in question tags which

\(^{135}\) Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, p. 64.

may follow imperatives there is always a "you," as in 'Close the door, will you?' or 'won't you?' and "since the form question tag is completely dependent upon the grammar of the underlying sentence, the underlying sentence must contain 'you' as the subject noun phrase."137 Thus concludes Lees, "imperative sentences of the form 'Close the door' do have, in a perfectly clear and formal sense, an underlying subject 'you'. . . the old 'understood' subject . . . . The idea of elliptical constituents in a sentence has a purely formal explanation in the automatic deletion of certain grammatical symbols from strings under transformational rules."138

The concept of the sentence in g-t grammar is ultimately derived from the assumptions held in the seventeenth-century philosophical grammar of Port Royal "in which a Cartesian approach to language is developed."139 Descartes found man's uniqueness best represented in his possession of language, and observed that man's ability to create new sentences for any new situation proves that, in its normal use, human language, unlike animal pseudo-language, "is free from the control of independently identifiable external stimuli and internal states," and rather than being "restricted to any practical communicative function . . . it is . . . an instrument of free thought and self-expression."140 Adoption of these and similar assumptions helped the development of the mentalistic approach of the Port Royal Grammar of 1660 which consequently identified mentalistic

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140 Ibid., p. 29.
processes with linguistic processes. For instance, the Cartesian distinction between body and mind found an echo in language study in the sense that language was viewed as having an outer and an inner aspect. The outer aspect was identified with the uttered sequence of sounds (i.e., the surface structure of the sentence), and the inner aspect (i.e., the deep structure of the sentence) was conceived of as elementary propositions of subject-predicate form, in the mind. Further, it was recognized that the elementary judgments were not asserted when the surface structure was produced, hence the deep and surface structures of the sentence were not identical. The following quotation may shed some light on the philosophical view at the root of the concept of the sentence in g-t grammar:

The principal form of thought . . . is the judgment, in which something is affirmed of something else. Its linguistic expression is the proposition, the two terms of which are the "subject," qui est ce dont on affirme" and the "attribut," qui est ce qu'on affirme." The subject and the attribute may be 'simple,' as in 'la terre est ronde,' or 'complex' ("compose"), as in . . . 'Dieu invisible a créé le mond visible." Furthermore, in such cases as these, the complex subject and the complex attribute

enferment, au moins dans nostre esprit, plusieurs jugements dont on peut faire autant de propositions: comme quand je dis, 'Dieu invisible a créé le monde visible,' il se passe trois jugemens dans mon esprit renfermes dans cette proposition. Car je juge premierment que Dieu est invisible. 2. Qu'il a créé le monde. 3. Que le monde est visible." Et de ces trois proposition, la seconde est la principale et l'essentielle de la proposition. Mais la première et la troisième ne sont qu'incidentes, et ne font que partie de la principale, dont la première en compose le sujet, et la seconde l'attribut . . . or, ces propositions incidentes sont souvent dans nostre esprit, sans estre exprimées par des paroles, comme dans l'exemple proposé (viz., 'Dieu invisible a créé le monde visible').

Clearly, as the above quotation indicates, Port Royal theory portrays the sentence as a bipartite predicational utterance, and teaches that a sentence has an outer and an inner structure. The former exemplified by "Dieu invisible a cree le monde visible," and the latter by its constituent propositions: "Dieu est invisible," "Dieu a cree le monde," and "le monde est visible," present in the mind of the speaker and to be born in the mind of the perceiver of the outer structure, when he understands it.

It is on this model that g-t grammar, "essentially a modern and more explicit version of the Port Royal theory," teaches $S \rightarrow NP + VP$, and sees a 'deep structure' beneath the 'surface structure' of the sentence. The importance of these assumptions becomes more manifest when we consider, as already hinted, that it is the knowledge of this interrelation between the deep and surface structures of the sentence that in g-t grammar is construed to be the knowledge of a language. In Chomsky's words:

Knowledge of a language involves the ability to assign deep and surface structures to an infinite range of sentences, to relate these structures appropriately, and to assign a semantic interpretation and a phonetic interpretation to the paired deep and surface structures.$^{142}$

This conversion of deep structure to surface structure is performed by what Chomsky calls "grammatical transformations" carried out by internalized rules whose unconscious application enables the speaker to speak by transforming the propositions of deep structure (i.e., the meaning in his mind) into sentences with surface structure (i.e., his actually uttered sentences), and also enables him to understand the sentences of others by

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transforming them into propositions of deep structure. Chomsky illustrates this point by showing how the sentence "A wise man is honest" is generated. First the meaning of this sentence mentally appears as two unasserted propositions, thus demonstrable:

\[
\begin{align*}
S & \\
& \text{NP} \quad \text{VP} \\
& \quad \text{a} \quad \text{man} \quad S \\
& \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{VP} \\
& \quad \text{man} \quad \text{is} \quad \text{wise} \\
& \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{VP} \\
& \quad \text{is} \quad \text{honest}
\end{align*}
\]

And then through the application of transformational rules like (a) the assignment of the marker 'wh-' to the most deeply embedded NP, "man," (b) replacement of this embedded NP by "who," (c) deletion of "who is," and (d) inversion of "man" and "wise" it is transformed into the surface structure:

\[
\begin{align*}
S & \\
& \text{NP} \quad \text{VP} \\
& \quad \text{a} \quad \text{wise} \quad \text{man} \\
& \quad \text{is} \\
& \quad \text{honest}
\end{align*}
\]

However, later interpretations of the first phrase structure rule seem to make it less dependent on deep structure. In fact at times, for instance in case of interjections, such interpretations seem as plausible as the reconstruction of the predicational pattern through zero morphemes.

\[\text{1ib3} \]
\[\text{Ibid., pp. 25-26.}\]
and dummy symbols. Accordingly, after asserting that in $S \rightarrow \text{NP + VP}$ "The sentence itself has not been changed—only the symbol," and after explaining that "NP in this rule is similar to the subject of the sentence, and VP is equivalent to the predicate," Burt Liebert says:

This rule $S \rightarrow \text{NP + VP}$ does not mean that every sentence 'contains' a noun phrase and a verb phrase, but that it is treated grammatically on the basis of these two parts. For example, the sentence 'Let's have lunch' contains a null ($\emptyset$) NP. The treatment of sentences on an NP + VP basis is satisfactory for grammatical analysis of English, particularly written English, for the NP + VP construction is the favorite form (most common) sentence of the language, and in the cases in which a sentence lacks one of these parts, that part can be expressed as a null ($\emptyset$).

Thus apparently to make the concept of the sentence better applicable to non-predicational surface structures, Liebert expands the formula to include interjections and fragments as well:

$$S \rightarrow \begin{cases} \text{Interjection} \\ \text{Fragment} \\ \text{NP + VP} \end{cases}$$

Accordingly, he diagrams an 'interjection sentence' thus:

$$S \downarrow \text{Interjection} \downarrow \text{Wow}$$

And a 'fragment sentence' thus:

$$S \downarrow \text{Fragment} \downarrow \text{Upstairs}$$

However, after asserting that "Fragments and interjections give

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smoothness, pace, and color to language but seldom furnish interesting material for grammatical analysis," Liebert concentrates only on "the third type of sentence, the NP + VP variety."  

Thus, it becomes clear that the sentence in g-t grammar is conceived of as a bipartite predication, and that when the actual sentence is not a bipartite predication, they supply it, at analysis, with the parts it needs to be a predication. This is done on the basis of the assumption that the syntax of a language consists of two systems of rules: "a 'base system' that generates deep structures and a 'transformational system' that maps these into surface structures."  

And since comprehension and communication is carried out through mental formation and transformation of propositions, the components of a sentence, in accordance with the rules of 'base system,' may be re-written as propositions. In Chomsky's words "The base rules allow for the introduction of new propositions (that is, there are rewriting rules of the form: A → . . . S . . . , where S is the initial symbol of the phrase-structure grammar that constitutes the base)."  

And this 'introduction of new propositions' or reconstruction of the transformationally deleted parts carried out through zero morphemes and dummy symbols, is justified on the grounds that a sentence consists of a deep structure comprised of a series of propositions, and a surface structure; and that the propositions of the deep structure are not always point-by-point reflected in the surface structure.

Hence, as Lester illustrates, the adjective 'slender' in the sentence

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145 Ibid., p. 153.
146 Ibid., p. 42.
147 Ibid.
"A slender boy stuck his head into the back room" asserts that 'the boy was slender.' Similarly, the modifying adverb of place 'next to the window' in "The picture next to the window needs to be straightened" asserts that 'the picture is next to the window.' And the adjectives 'tall,' 'young,' 'wearing a beret,' and 'whom you introduced me to' in the sentence 'The tall young man wearing a beret whom you introduced me to borrowed my car last night,' make respectively the following assertions about 'the man:' 'The man is tall,' 'The man is young,' 'The man wore a beret,' 'You introduced me to the man.'

It is noteworthy that the g-t grammarian's conception of the sentence as a bipartite predication through restoration of the transformationally deleted parts, is not resorting to the theory of ellipsis. According to Chomsky, while the theory of ellipses developed by the Spanish scholar Sanctius "is intended by Sanctius merely as a device for interpretation of texts . . . . [And] need not consist of a set of principles represented somehow in the mind as an aspect of normal human competence and intelligence," the restoration of the transformationally deleted parts in g-t grammar is the reconstruction of the deep structure which "is 'present to the mind,' as the signal, with its surface structure, is produced or perceived by the bodily organs." In other words, what is restored are the transformationally deleted parts, as for instance an embedded sentence represented in surface structure by a phrase or a word while in deep phrase structure it is a predication.

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148 Lester, Introductory Transformational Grammar, p. 222.

149 Chomsky, Language and Mind, p. 16.
CONCLUSION

It is a fact long since recognized that the unit of speech is the sentence. But there is difference of opinion concerning the form of the sentence.

Generally speaking, there are two views concerning the sentence. According to one view the sentence is a grammatically complete utterance unit whose major constituents are the subject and the predicate. This view which is held by school grammarians and g-t grammarians dates back to the seventeenth-century philosophical grammar. The advocates of this view argue that language is born in predication. Whether implicit as in animal cry, and a child's sentence-word, or explicit as in the complete declarative sentences, the minimum essential is predication. They argue that propositions are constructed in the form of predications. And since "the principal form of thought is the judgment, in which something is affirmed of something else,"¹⁵⁰ it is natural for the sentence to be a predication.

According to the other view held by some scholarly traditional grammarians, and (taxonomic) structural linguists, the main characteristic of a sentence is its capability to stand alone, i.e., to be grammatically independent. The exponents of this view admit that the bipartite predication is a major favorite sentence form in English. Yet they point to utterances lacking either the subject or the predicate or both, which still carry on the function of a sentence, by standing alone as the unit of speech.

¹⁵⁰ Chomsky, Cartesian Linguistics, p. 33.
Separately considered, both views are convincing. On the one hand, it seems to be a fact that "the minimum essential of a language is predication." Hence, it appears quite plausible that each sentence as the unit of speech should bear this characteristic stamp of predication. And on the other hand, when a phrase, a word or an interjection is accepted as a sentence, since the sentence is the unit of speech and speech kindles in predication, the superficially non-predicative utterance must in fact be a predication, having undergone deletion transformations. Such an interpretation is not without a basis in recent studies. For instance, Lees is not alone in believing that "the traditional analysis of the imperative as consisting of an 'understood subject 'you' is . . . quite correct and in a rather literal sense at that;" Longacre, too, concerning the non-predicative minor sentences says:

It would probably be better to set up full sentences and then consider minor sentences to be conditioned variants of those with deletion of the bulk of the sentence structure--conditioned variants so that we set up in every case not just a maximum structure and a minimum structure but also a subminimum structure in which we actually delete certain items otherwise considered to be obligatory parts of the construction.

Further, belief in predicative nature of the sentence is increasingly finding expression in more recent inquiries. For instance, Zawadowski in a detailed, rather convincing discussion suggests that a sentence is always a predication. In his words "a sentence is a prediceme with a distinct grammatical and segmental sign of predication." 

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151 de Laguna, p. 6.
153 Robert E. Longacre, "Tagmemic Theory" in Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics XX (1967), 60. [A panel discussion].
When the unit of speech is considered, whether it is defined as a predication or as a grammatically independent form, the same thing is discussed—the sentence. Grammatical independence is a fundamental fact about the sentence. In explicit predication grammatical independence results from the relationship between the subject and the predicate. But in implicit predication as in phrases, single words, and interjections, when they stand grammatically independent, the predication is inferred from the context of the situation. And since grammatical independence results from predication, the superficially non-predicative utterances which in speech stand alone are predications in the context. In Sundén's words "every predication is a sentence and ... every sentence may be apprehended as a predication." Thus, predication and grammatical independence are different names designating the same object—the utterance which is the unit of speech—the sentence.

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