



Grammatical Relations Hierarchy in English

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ABSTRACT

The grammatical relations are one part of traditional grammar that deals with important concepts such as subject, direct object, and indirect object. The main aim of this paper is to give a descriptive account of the term "grammatical relations hierarchy" in the English language depending on the theory of "Relational Grammar" as it demonstrates the relationship between these syntactic categories. Relational grammar predicates the hierarchy of these syntactic phenomena as subject > direct object > indirect object > non-terms. This paper attempts to describe the importance of these concepts and the hierarchy in the occurrence of these arguments in different constructions in order to identify the most privileged syntactic phenomena. This paper is concerned with giving general information about the concept of grammatical relations and the grammatical relations hierarchy. Then it attempts to show whether the word order of the grammatical relations in the English language obeys this hierarchy. Various constructions have been investigated for the purpose of demonstrating the position of these grammatical relations and the syntactic environments they are privileged to occur. The research has concluded that in the majority of the analyzed linear orders, the subject lies at the top of the hierarchy, and is the most privileged syntactic argument in English sentence constructions. However, in certain syntactic transformations like reflexivization and

extraction constructions, it loses this privilege and shares it with other syntactic arguments like direct and indirect objects.

1. Introduction:

Grammatical relation, also known as grammatical function, refers to any of the various particular syntactic roles that a noun phrase can have within a sentence. Grammatical relations, as their name indicates, are grammatical in nature, which are independent of the semantic roles in the principle of those elements. Some linguists recognize grammatical relations as “subject, direct object, indirect object, and oblique object”, which are the most frequently recognized grammatical relations. On the other hand, some other linguists would add “genitive and object of comparison”, whereas others would extend the idea to the syntactic functions represented by categories other than noun phrases, such as predicate or complement. In the 1970s, linguists began to emphasize the syntactic significance of grammatical relations, it was embedded in the influential paper written by Keenan and Comrie (1977), which established the concept of the NP Accessibility Hierarchy. Around the same time, “Relational Grammar”, a version of generative grammar in which grammatical relations were taken as the fundamental primitives was developed by Perlmutter and his colleagues (Trask, 1993, p. 123).

From the perspective of Farrell (2005), "relational grammar" (RG) is a syntactic theory that is built on the concept of grammatical relations. The primitive and basic concepts of grammatical relations are “subject, direct object, and indirect object”. These syntactic categories are assumed to have relations, and they are organized within the clause structure in all languages. In accordance with typological research on a “grammatical-relation hierarchy”, these are a set of core relations known as "term" relations that are considered to be ranked relative to each other and outrank all non-term relations. The numerals 1, 2, and 3 represent the linear order of these syntactic phenomena (p.112).

Van Valin (2004) asserts that the role of these concepts in grammatical systems is described in a relational structure. In traditional grammar, the three grammatical relations were very important, and they are still an important part of many

contemporary grammatical theories, and these notions of grammatical relations would be very important for the explanation of morphosyntactic phenomena (p. 21). From the perspective of Bickel (2011), the morphosyntactic properties that connect an argument to a clause, such as its subject or object, are traditionally referred to as grammatical relations (GR), and these are some significant points about the traditional notion of GRs:

1. They relate an argument to a clause.
2. They are identified by syntactic features (p.321).

Van Valin (2004) asserts that subject and direct object play a remarkable variety of roles in the syntax of different languages. Regarding the finite verb agreement in English as an example of the role of these syntactic phenomena in the grammatical description. The agreement is triggered by the subject NP rather than the direct object NP. As is shown in the following examples:

- (1) (a) "The boys know the answers".
(b) "The boy knows the answer".
(c) "The boys know/*knows the answer".
(d) "The boy knows/*know the answers".

Generally speaking, in (1a), both NPS are plural, whereas in (1b), both NPs are singular. However, in (1c), the direct object is singular, while the subject NP is plural, and the verb agrees with the subject and demonstrates the plural rather than the singular agreement. In a similar way, in (1d), the subject NP is singular and agrees with the verb, and the verb illustrates singular agreement with the subject, not plural agreement with the direct object NP. As a result, the agreement must be triggered by the subject, not the direct object. (p. 21). There are some studies that have been conducted on "Grammatical Relations Hierarchy".

A study entitled "A Study of Grammatical Relation Hierarchy in the Contemporary Written Persian Language" was written by Sharifi, Sh., and Fazaeli, M., (2011) at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. The study aims at whether the word order of the

grammatical relations in the Persian sentences obeys the grammatical relations hierarchy (subject < direct object < indirect object < oblique) in the Persian language. The researchers conclude that “the Persian language is the inchoative subject language” but in the considerable word order types, the direct object constituent does not appear in the post-subject position which was predicted by the typological conventions. Additionally, they point out that in contrast to the grammatical relation hierarchy, the dominating position of the indirect object is also the post-direct object position. The important point that was concluded by the researchers is that according to the finding of this study there can be some disorders in the attested word order of the grammatical constituents in Persian and they do not totally obey this hierarchy but it seems it is mostly the oblique constituent that causes these disorders. This constituent has more freedom and can be moved to different positions in the sentence compared to the other constituents. Finally, the researchers conclude that the Persian language does not follow the grammatical relation hierarchy which is considered “the typological universal”.

Another work entitled (Thematic and Grammatical Hierarchies in the Persian Language) was performed by Mirzaei A., at Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran in 2022. This descriptive study identified the relationship between grammatical relations and thematic roles based on the concept of implicational hierarchy. It has investigated the semantic hierarchy for different grammatical relations such as agent, experiencer, cause, theme, stimulus, and attribute have been considered. The study concluded that apart from this dominant tendency, the syntactic and semantic arguments have a remarkable correlation with each other. For instance, the agent can be placed in the direct object, indirect object, or even adjunct position in addition to the subject position, and the other remarkable result is the appearance of the experiencer in the object position and stimulus in the subject position.

The current study is different from the previous ones in the sense that it identifies and analyzes the “Grammatical Relations Hierarchy” “subject > direct object > indirect object > non-term” in the English language. It is an attempt to give a descriptive account of the term "grammatical relations hierarchy" in the English language utilizing the “Relational Grammar” theory.

2. Grammatical Relations Hierarchy:

“SUBJECT > DIRECT OBJECT > INDIRECT OBJECT > NON-TERMS”

One part of traditional grammar is grammatical relations. Many syntactic phenomena in Indo-European languages concern grammatical relations such as “subject, direct object, and indirect object”. These notions seem to be important since they are included in the grammar of many non-Indo-European languages. Regarding the “passive construction” as an example, the object of the active voice becomes the subject of the passive voice, and the subject of the active voice is either missing or becomes the object of a preposition. Another example is the -s in the third person singular present tense verb in English, which indicates that it agrees with the subject (Robert et al., 1997, p.242). From the perspective of Pavey (2010), the subject is the most “privileged argument” since it has particular functions that the other arguments do not have. In this case, the term “privileged syntactic argument” (PSA) is used for the subject of the sentence since the term "subject" is often misunderstood or used vaguely (p. 143). The description of the grammatical relations hierarchy from the perspective of Van Valin (2004) is:

This hierarchy embodies the claim that if a syntactic phenomenon is restricted to a single term type, then it will always be restricted to subjects. In other words, if there is a single privileged syntactic argument in a construction, it is the subject. If there are two privileged arguments, they are subject and direct object. If there are three, then they are subject, direct object and indirect object. Hence if a syntactic phenomenon targets more than one term type, it will always include subjects (p.46).

The following sections exhibit the syntactic environments in which sentence elements play a vital role.

3. Subject in Simple Constructions:

In the above section, the grammatical relations hierarchy was explained, but in this section, the focus will be on the testing of the position of the subject in simple constructions such as imperative construction, reflexivization, wh-question

formation, and cleft construction. Trask (1993) maintains that the most prominent and easily recognizable grammatical relation that a noun phrase can have in a clause is the subject (p.266). Among the elements of the clause other than the verb, the subject is more important than other elements that often exist (Quirk et al., 1985, p.724). The following sections shed light on the syntactic constructions in which the subject is privileged to occur:

3.1 Imperative Formation:

In this section, the researcher will examine the position of the subject in imperative construction. It is the first construction that targets subjects universally. In imperative formation, there is a deletion and interpretation of the second-person subject as the addressee, and the form of the verb is tenseless (Van Valin, 2004, p. 41). Tallerman (2015) states that in imperative constructions, subjects function as the missing argument. For instance, a command such as "Sit!" or "Eat your greens!" is an imperative, which includes both intransitive and transitive verbs that function as (or overt in some languages) second-person subject pronouns ('you') (p.208). As it is demonstrated in the following instances:

- (2) a. Open the door!
- b. Speak!
- c. 'Pour me a cup of tea!'

The addressee in these imperative formations is the subject of the verb, and it is true everywhere (Van Valin, 2004, p.41).

3.2 Reflexivization:

Reflexivization is a kind of construction that includes subjects. Generally, the reflexive pronoun is used as the subject when its antecedent appears in the same clause, but it can also be used as the direct object, indirect object, and object of the preposition (Kolln and Funk, 2012, p.295). Van Valin (2004) illustrates the following instances in which these syntactic phenomena can be the antecedent of a reflexive pronoun:

- (3) a. "James saw himself".

Antecedent = subject

- b. “Sam told Miriam about herself”. Antecedent = direct object
- c. “Miriam talked to Sam about himself”. Antecedent = indirect object
- d. “Miriam talked with Sam about himself”. Antecedent = non-term

The above examples indicate that these syntactic phenomena “subject, direct object, indirect object” or even a “non-term” can be the antecedent of a reflexive pronoun in English, so it is not the only unique property of subjects. In some languages, subjects are always included in the class of arguments that can be used as an antecedent for reflexive pronouns. In English, there must be an agreement in person, number, and gender between reflexive pronouns and their antecedents (p. 42).

3.3 Wh-Question Formation and It-Cleft Construction:

The next two constructions relevant to the syntactic role of the subject are wh-question formation and it-cleft construction. Van Valin (2004) states that when these two types of constructions are limited to a single term type, they are always restricted to the subject. In English, concerning “grammatical relations”, these constructions are unconstrained (p. 43). ‘A wh-question is a term used in the grammatical sub-classification of question types to refer to a question beginning with a question word’ (Crystal, 2008, p.520). Wh-question formation is shown in the following examples:

- (4) a. “Who ate my sandwich?” *Who* = subject
- b. “Who did Pat see?” *Who* = direct object
- c. “Who did Leslie give the tickets to?” *Who* = indirect object
- d. “With whom did Kim go to the party?” *Whom* = object of the preposition *with*
- e. “Whose car did Dana drive?” *Whose* = possessor
- f. “Who is Chris taller than?” *Who* = object of comparative (*than*)

(Van Valin, 2004, p. 43).

In the grammatical description, there is a kind of construction known as a cleft sentence. In this kind of construction, a single clause has been divided into two separate sections, each one of these sections has its own verb (Crystal, 2008, p. 79). The cleft sentence is introduced by a verb phrase in which the main verb is typically

verb to "be", and the remainder of the sentence is introduced by a relative pronoun. It is a construction where a sentence constituent is moved from its original position into a separate clause to emphasize it (Saady and Muhamad, 2021, p.202). Luo (1994) demonstrates cleft sentences in the following examples:

- (5) a. "It is John that came". John=subject of *come*
b. "It is John that I saw". John= direct object of *saw*
c. "It is John that she gave a book to". John= object of the preposition *to*
d. "It is John that she went to the movies with". John= object of the preposition *with*
e. "It is John whose car broke down". John= possessor of *car*
f. "It is John that Tom is taller than". John= object of comparative *than* (p.77).

These two kinds of constructions are similar. They are known as "extraction constructions" because, in a simple declarative sentence, the "WH-expression" or "clefted" NP or PP appears in a place that is different from its original position. With respect to the above-mentioned constructions such as imperative formation, reflexivization, and two types of extraction constructions, when there are restrictions on the involvement of these terms in the constructions, the subject is considered to be the most important "grammatical relation"(Van Valin, 2004, pp. 43-46).

3.4 Subject in complex constructions:

In this section, the study moves on to a more complex structure, emphasizing the significance of identifying the privileged syntactic argument (subject).

3.5 Relative Clause:

According to Tallerman (2015), there is a construction that is likely to be found in all languages in one form or another, which is known as the relative clause. A relative clause is a sort of subordinate clause that modifies (= explains something about) the head noun in the matrix clause. As in:

- (6) a. "The forms [that arrived yesterday]". • Subject
b. "The paper [(which) we discuss next week]". • Direct object
c. "The child to [whom Mr. Kimura gave a dog] has a bad cough". • Indirect object

- d. “This is the student [who I always forget **her** name]”. • Possessor
e. “This is the guy [who my cat is smarter than **him**]”. • Object of comparison

As a consequence, subject, direct object, object of preposition or postposition, possessor NP, and object of comparison are the five NP positions that can possibly be relativized. These NP positions are arranged in what is known as the "Accessibility Hierarchy" cross-linguistically, which places the subject at the top and the object of comparison at the bottom of the hierarchy. The idea is demonstrated in the following hierarchy, which exhibits:

NP Accessibility Hierarchy for relative clause formation:

Su > Direct Obj > Object of adposition > Possessor > Object of comparison

This hierarchy is demonstrated in the grammar of individual languages. According to this hierarchy, subjects are the most accessible to "relativization" and it is placed in the highest position in the hierarchy, and all known languages can relativize subjects, although relative clause construction in English has a lot of latitudes. On the other hand, the object of comparison in (6e) has the lowest position in this hierarchy, as demonstrated in the above examples. Generally speaking, for relativized subjects and, in many cases, the direct objects, the gap strategy is expected to be at the highest position, as is shown in (6a) and (6b). (pp. 280–282). From the perspective of Van Valin (2004), in English, there is no restriction on these extraction constructions and these syntactic phenomena have no important role in these constructions because the subject loses this privilege and shares it with other syntactic arguments like “direct object, indirect object, and even non-term”. So they are not considered a good test for subjecthood in such a language (pp.48).

3.6 Matrix-Coding Construction (Raising Construction):

Van Valin (2004) asserts that a “matrix-coding construction” is another construction that is also known as a "raising" construction that involves an element occurring at a position different from its canonical position (p.49). Some models of transformational grammar consider raising as a type of rule that raises a constituent to a higher position

(Crystal, 2008, p. 401). Subject raising from the perspective of Trask (1993) ‘is a phenomenon in which an NP which is semantically the subject of a lower predicate appears on the surface as a subject of a higher predicate’ (p. 267). In English there are two types of matrix coding constructions, such as “matrix-coding-as-subject construction” and “matrix-coding-as-object construction”, which are demonstrated in the following examples:

- (7) a. “It seems (that) the students have forgotten the assignment”.
 á. “The students seem to have forgotten the assignment”.
 b. “Leslie believes (that) the students have forgotten the assignment”.
 b'. “Leslie believes the students to have forgotten the assignment”.

The above examples (7a) and (7a') demonstrate "the matrix-coding-as-subject construction". In (7a), the subject of the higher clause is the expletive subject "it", which agrees with the verb "seem" and becomes the subject of the *seem-clause*. On the other hand, in the same sentence (7a) the NP "the students" in the embedded clause is the subject, while the NP "the students" in (7á) raises to the initial position and becomes the subject of the matrix clause, and the complement clause here is a tenseless infinitival marked by the preposition "to". The important thing in “the matrix-coding-as-subject construction” is that the matrix-coded "NP" is interpreted as the subject of the complement clause, regardless of whether it is the "actor or undergoer" of the lower clause.

On the other hand, (7b) and (7b') are examples of “matrix-coding-as-object construction”. The NP "the students" in (7b) and (7a) is interpreted as the subject of the complement clause, whereas the NP in the matrix clause in (7b') is the direct object of the matrix verb "believe", and again, the embedded clause is a tenseless infinitive marked by the preposition “to”. In “the matrix-coding-as-object construction”, the matrix-coded NP, which is the direct object of "believe", must be interpreted as the subject of the complement clause, which is a crucial constraint on this construction. In all the above sentences in (7a),(7á), (7b), and (7b'), the NP "the students" is the actor of "forget," so the semantic role of this NP, "the students", does not change and it is not regarded as “the undergoer” of "believe" in (b) and (b')

because in both examples, what "Leslie believes" is that "the students forgot the assignment". Cross-linguistically, if one or both of these constructions exist in a particular language, in this case, "matrix-coding-as-subject constructions" are much more common than "matrix-coding-as-object constructions", and the prediction of the "grammatical relations hierarchy" for this kind of construction is that if there is only one function for matrix-coded NP in the embedded clause, it should be restricted to subjects only (Van Valin, 2004, pp.49-53).

To summarize, in the majority of the analyzed linear orders in the above syntactic transformations like reflexivization and extraction constructions the subject and other arguments are situated in a position that is totally different from their canonical position that is predicted by the grammatical relations hierarchy, and the subject loses its privileged and shares it with other syntactic arguments like direct and indirect objects. While in raising construction, the function of NP in the embedded clause is only restricted to the subject. So the subject is the only privileged syntactic argument in this construction.

3.7 Control Structure or (Equi-NP-Deletion):

All of the constructions examined above have an element that does not appear in its canonical place in a sentence. In this section, the focus will be on "control structure", which is known as "equi-NP-deletion," and "coordinate construction" which have different properties. In these two constructions, there is a deletion of an element that normally occurs in a simple clause, and the important question here is: "which element can be omitted?" (Van Valin, 2004, p. 53). In the control construction, there is an antecedent in non-finite clauses with PRO subject. The PRO subject is controlled by its antecedent. There are two phenomena in control construction, such as "subject control" and "object control." In the subject control phenomenon, the controller is the subject of the higher verb. For example, in a sentence like "John tried PRO to quit," PRO is controlled by "John," so in this sentence, the antecedent is the controller of PRO. On the other hand, in the object control phenomenon, the object is the controller of the higher verb. For example, "John persuaded Mary PRO to quit," so, in this sentence, PRO is controlled by the object of the matrix clause, which means Mary is the controller of PRO. The term "control predicate", such as "try" or "persuade",

refers to a verb that takes an infinitive complement with a (controlled) PRO subject (Radford, 2009, p. 380). Miller (2002) illustrates the following instance:

(8) “Fiona hoped to meet the Prime Minister”.

This example contains one complement, the infinitive phrase “to meet the PM,” which has an understood subject and is considered a non-finite clause. For instance, “Fiona” is the person who is doing the “hoping” and the “meeting,” and it is considered to be the logical subject of “meet the PM.” “Fiona” is also the grammatical subject of the main verb that controls the understood subject of the infinitive “meet,” which is dependent on the main verb “hoped.” Consider the following instances, in which the verbs contain two complements, a noun phrase, and an infinitive:

- (9) a. “Fiona persuaded Arthur to bake a cake”.
b. “Susan wanted Jane to study German”.

In the above examples, the verbs “persuaded” and “wanted” are followed by a noun phrase and an infinitive phrase. The noun phrase “Arthur” undergoes “the persuasion” and does the action of “the baking”, and “Jane” in (9b) was the target of “Susan’s wishes” and does the action of “studying”. On the other hand, the infinitive phrases in (9a) and (9b) have logical subjects that are controlled by the noun phrases “Arthur” and “Jane”. The (9a) is expanded in the following example to clarify the “missing” argument:

(9a) “Fiona persuaded Arthur: Arthur to bake a cake”.

In this example, there is a connection between the infinitive and a finite clause, “Arthur baked a cake.” The deletion of the argument occurs on the path from the finite to the infinitive, and the grammatical subject of the infinitive clause is always the impacted argument. The analysts consider the subject as the pivot to the infinitive construction (pp.89-90). It makes no difference whether the omitted argument in both constructions is an “actor” or an “undergoer”. The most important property of the control construction is that “the subject” must be the missing argument in the

embedded clause (Van Valin, 2004, p. 55). In this section, the basic properties of the privileged syntactic argument (subject) in control construction have been presented, and in the following section, the researcher will turn to the discussion of the function and position of the subject in another construction known as conjunction Reduction.

3.8 Conjunction Reduction:

Coordination is another kind of grammatical construction in which two syntactic elements with the same syntactic function are connected together, which is different from subordination, which occurs when one element is grammatically dependent on the other (Payne, 2011, p.353). From the perspective of Tallerman (2015), "Conjunction Reduction" is a construction that has two or more clauses, each of which is missing an argument except the first clause. In English, ellipsis (= omission) of a subject can occur in the second of two conjoined clauses. When the subject is co-referential with (= refers back to) the subject of the first clause, it can undergo ellipsis in the second clause (pp.243-244). The following examples illustrate this claim:

- (10) a. "John got mad at Bill, and he punched him".
b. "John got mad at Bill, and _ punched him".
c."*John got mad at Bill, and he punched _".
d. "John got mad at Bill, and __ was punched by him".

The sentence (10a) consists of two clauses, and the subjects of both clauses are coreferential, but the subject of the second clause is not deleted. If the missing argument in this kind of construction known as "Conjunction Reduction" is interpreted as coreferential to the subject of the first clause, it should be omitted as shown in (10b), and the result will be grammatical. On the other hand, in (10c), one of the arguments of the second clause is omitted, which is the direct object, and the result is not grammatically correct, because it is not coreferential to the subject of the first clause. In this kind of construction, the subject of both clauses must be the same. There are similarities between "control construction" and "conjunction reduction". For example, there is a missing argument in the complement clause in "control construction", and in the second clause in "conjunction reduction" in which the

interpretation of this deleted argument is taken from one of the arguments in the higher clause. On the other hand, in control constructions with verbs like "try" in English, the subject controls the main clause, so the subject of the main clause is the controller, because there is only one NP in the main clause, and it is the only controller choice. While with verbs like "persuade," it is not the subject that controls the matrix clause, but the direct object that is the controller of the higher clause. Similarly, in the conjunction reduction constructions, the subject is always the controller in the first clause, and the above example, "John got mad at Bill, and _ punched him", demonstrates this claim. In this example, the subject of the first clause must be the person who is doing the action of "punching" (Van Valin, 2004, pp. 56-57). Based on the discussions in the above sections, the subject is regarded as the most privileged syntactic argument, but in the following sections, the discussion will concentrate on the properties of the direct and indirect objects.

4. Direct and Indirect Object:

The privileged syntactic argument (the subject) was examined in detail in the previous section. In this section, the focus will be on other privileged syntactic arguments, such as direct and indirect objects. . In grammatical relations, the direct object is the second obligatory element of the transitive verb in which it is borne by a noun phrase that occurs within the verb phrase and most commonly expresses a patient that undergoes the action of the verb. The direct object differentiates between transitive and intransitive verbs (Trask, 1993, p.82). Aarts (2001) defines the direct object semantically and syntactically. Semantically, the element which refers to the entity that undergoes the action or process represented by the verb is known as direct object. As in:

(11) "My sister found this book".

The referent of "this book" in the above sentence undergoes a process of being "found." Direct objects have a patient role in terms of the type of role they play in sentences, which is similar to subjects that have an agentive (i.e., instigator) role. On the other hand, the syntactic definition of direct objects in terms of their structural

properties is that they are noun phrases that have a strong relationship with the verb, and according to their position in a sentence, they occur after the main verb (pp. 15-16).

The key feature that indirect objects have in common is semantic rather than morphosyntactic. In ditransitive verbs, they usually encode the recipient argument. Syntactically, indirect objects behave as oblique arguments in English (Van Valin, 2004, p.67). Comrie (1989) states that the indirect object can occur before or after the direct object. For example, "I gave John the book." In this instance, the indirect object "John" comes before the direct object "the book" without a preposition. On the other hand, it can appear after the direct object with the preposition "to", as in "I gave the book to John". In these examples, the term "indirect object" refers to a semantic role (recipient) rather than a grammatical role, because these are different syntactic encodings of the same semantic role. The noun/prepositional phrases "John" and "to John" seem to have little syntactic property in common other than semantic similarities, as demonstrated by their contrasting ability to become the subject of passive: "The book was presented to John," but "it was not delivered to *John"(p.67).

4.1 The Objects in Simple Constructions:

There are some constructions in many languages that allow the arguments to be realized as direct objects, although they are not the original direct objects. This type of alternation can be found in four different ways in English. The first is known as the "dative shift," and it involves the indirect object (Van Valin, 2004, p. 60).

4.2 Dative Alternation:

Dative shift (also known as dative movement) occurs when the basic dative (an indirect object) appears as a direct object and the actual direct object appears like some type of peripheral element (Trask, 1993, p. 71). In some languages, ditransitive verbs can alternatively be realized in two different syntactic configurations, which are known as "the prepositional dative" and "the double object construction," as in:

- (12) “Mary gave candy to the children”. The prepositional dative
(13) “Mary gave the children candy”. ‘Double Object construction’
(Rill, 2011, p.2).

Van Valin (2004) illustrates the following examples to support this claim. The “dative shift” along with the corresponding passive versions are shown with an abstract schema of the alternation as: “Chris” = NP1, “the package” = NP2, and “Pat” = NP3.

- (14) a. “Chris sent the package to Pat”. Direct object = undergoer (theme)
 á. “The package was sent to Pat by Chris”.
 à. *Pat was sent the package to by Chris”.
- b. “Chris sent Pat the package”. Direct object = undergoer (recipient)
b'. “Pat was sent the package by Chris”.
b”. (*)The package was sent Pat by Chris.
- c. Np1 V Np2 To-Np3
 ć. Np1 V Np3 Np2

(14a’) is the only passive construction for (14a) that can be formed from an active voice sentence. The subject in (14a’) is “the package,” which is the direct object of the (14a) sentence. The (14b’) sentence, on the other hand, is the only passive form of (14b) in which “Pat” is both the direct object of (14b) and the subject of (14b’). However, the sentence (14b”) is not grammatically correct because “the package” cannot be the subject of the corresponding passive because it is not the direct object in (14b) (pp.60-61).

4.3 Transfer Alternation:

“Transfer alternation” is another alternation similar to the dative shift that is mentioned in the following examples:

- (15) a. “The president presented the award to Leslie”. Direct object = undergoer
(theme)

á. "The award was presented to Leslie by the president".

b. "The president presented Leslie with the award". Direct object = undergoer (recipient)

b'. "Leslie was presented with the award by the president".

c. "Np1 V Np2 *To*-Np3"

ć. "Np1 V Np3 *With*-Np2"

The main distinction between "transfer alternation" and "dative shift" is that the theme argument is not marked by a preposition in the dative alternation, while it is marked with the preposition "with" when it is not the undergoer in "transfer alternation." Verbs like "*give*" and "*send*" are canonical dative shifts, while verbs like "*present*" and "*supply*" are verbs of transfer alternation. On the other hand, the main similarity between these two alternations is that the non-oblique NP that is immediately following the verb in the active voice construction, in all of the above sentences, is the undergoer and the direct object (Van Valin, 2004, p. 61).

4.4 Locative Alternation:

From the perspective of Sówka-Pietraszewska (2019), the (three-argument) verb in the locative alternation demonstrates two different argument realization patterns for the non-causer arguments in the locative alternation, which indicates the caused-motion of the theme towards a location, or the goal. The "theme" argument, which undergoes a change of location, is selected by the verb in the locative variant. The "theme" is recognized as a direct object in this construction, which is followed by a prepositional phrase (PP), an oblique argument that is headed by the preposition "on," which instantiates the location. The location argument is encoded as a direct object, occurring post-verbally, in the alternative "with-variant," whereas the theme is headed by the preposition "with," which is encoded as a prepositional phrase. "Spray" and "load" are examples of semantic classes of verbs with similar root meanings. They describe the "caused-motion" of an entity, the theme, or the location in general. The following instances demonstrate locative alternation:

- (16) a. "John sprayed the paint on the wall".
 á. "John sprayed the wall with the paint".
- b. "John loaded the hay on the truck".
 b'. "John loaded the truck with the hay".

In these constructions, "the wall" in (16a) and "the truck" in (16b) imply the location argument, which is partially affected by the verbal activity. On the other hand, "the wall" is not completely covered "with the paint" in (16a), and "the truck" is only partly filled "with the hay" in (16c). In contrast, (16á) indicates that "the wall" was completely "covered with paint" and (16b') that "the truck" was completely "packed with hay." Van Valin (2004) maintains that there is a similarity between "the locative alternation" and "the transfer alternation" in that when the theme argument is not "undergoer" in both constructions, it is marked by the preposition "with" (p. 62).

4.5 Instrumental Alternation:

The last alternation, which is known as the "instrumental alternation," includes instrument NPs and verbs like "hit," as demonstrated in the following examples:

- (17) a. "Leslie hit the table with the stick". Direct object = undergoer (location)
 á. "The table was hit with the stick by Leslie".
- b. "Leslie hit the stick on the table". Direct object = undergoer (instrument)
 b'. "The stick was hit on the table by Leslie".
- c. "Np1 V Np2 *With*-Np3" (= 17a)
 ć. "Np1 V Np3 *On*-Np2" (=17b)

Either of the non-subject (the non-actor) arguments in all of these four alternations, function as the undergoer in the active constructions and the subject in the passive constructions. In these alternations, the indirect object (recipient) appears as a direct object, but this is not the unique feature of the indirect object. (Van Valin, 2004, p.62). In relational grammar, there are two processes known as promotion and demotion.

Promotion is a process of advancement in which a class of relation-changing makes a noun phrase that has a particular grammatical relation to some verb becomes more prominent to another grammatical relation to that verb. In other words, in the process of promotion, a noun phrase that has a lower position in the relational hierarchy is promoted to a higher position (Crystal, 2008, p. 391). On the other hand, in the process of demotion, an NP in the highest position like the subject in the active voice is demoted to the lowest position in the passive voice which is the oblique object (Brown and Miller, 2013, p.126). The above alternations have represented the process of promotion and demotion. In the passive construction, the direct object is promoted to the subject position and the subject is demoted to the lowest position which is the oblique object position, in the same way, the indirect object is promoted to the direct object position and then promoted to the subject position. In the following section, the focus will be on the topicalization of direct and indirect objects.

4.6 Topicalization of Objects:

Topicalization is defined by Fromkin et al. (2003) as a transformation that moves a grammatical element to the beginning of a sentence (p.597). ‘Topicalization takes place when a constituent is moved to the front of a sentence, so that it functions as topic’ (Crystal, 2008, p.488). There is a transformation in English and many other languages that refers to the movement of the direct object to the beginning of the sentence to emphasize it. This transformation is known as "topicalization" since the grammatical element, a direct object moves to the front of the sentence and becomes the topic of the sentence or conversation (Fromkin et al., 2003, p. 127). Aarts (2001) illustrates the following examples:

(18) a. “Do you like Belgian beer and Belgian wine?”

DO

DO

b. “[Belgian beer] I like —, but [Belgian wine] I hate —“.

DO

DO

This is a different grammatical structure that involves the movement of the direct objects from the "—" positions to a clause-initial position (p. 195). The transformation can be applied to the position of the direct object. For instance, a transformation can involve the movement of an NP, as in:

(19) a. "I saw John yesterday".

DO

b. "John I saw yesterday" (Gleason, 1961, p. 181).

DO

Huddleston and Pullum (2005) also claim that in various non-canonical constructions, the direct object is readily fronted while the indirect object is quite resistant. However, fronted direct objects are more acceptable than fronted indirect objects in general.

(20) a. "She gave him everything else".

IO DO

b. "Everything else she gave him". (Fronted direct object)

DO IO

c. "%Him she gave everything else". (Fronted indirect object) (p.72).

IO DO

When the indirect object occurs in a PP, it can also be topicalized. The following example illustrates this claim.

(21) a. "I gave the money to John".

ID

b. "*John I gave the money".

ID

c. “To John, I gave the money”. (Faraj, 2009, p. 26)

ID

4.7 Reflexivization:

Another construction that can be used to identify direct and indirect objects is reflexivization. They can be used as the antecedents of reflexive pronouns in English, which is the property of both direct and indirect objects. As it is shown in (3b), "Sam told Miriam about herself," in this example, "herself" refers back to "Miriam," so the antecedent is the direct object, and in the (3c) example, the antecedent is the indirect object. For instance, "Miriam talked to Sam about himself." In this example, "himself" refers back to "Sam," which is preceded by the "to" preposition.

4.8 WH-Question Formation, Clefting, and Relativization:

WH-question formation, clefting, and relativization are constructions that can be used to demonstrate direct and indirect objects in the English language. The example of WH-question formation which was mentioned in the previous section in (4b), as in: "Who did Pat see?" In this sentence, "who" is the direct object, and in (4c), "who" in "who did Leslie give the tickets to?" is treated as the indirect object of the sentence. A cleft construction is another construction that allows direct and indirect objects to appear as the head, as it was taken into account in (5b), "It is John that I saw", in this example, "John" is the direct object of "saw", and in (5c), "It is John that she gave a book to", "John" in this sentence is the object of the preposition "to". The final property of direct and indirect objects involves relativization. As it was shown in the (6b) example, "The paper (which) we discuss next week" "The paper" in this example is the head that is a direct object, and in the (6c) example, "The child to whom Mr. Kimura gave a dog has a bad cough." "The child" is the indirect object (Van Valin, 2004, p.65).

4.9 The Matrix-Coding- as-Object Construction:

According to Van Valin (2004), “the matrix-coding as-object construction” in English is another construction with a "derived" direct object. The syntactic characteristic of the subject of the embedded clause is the property of the direct object of the matrix

clause in languages that have this kind of construction because it allows the subject of the embedded clause to be realized as the direct object of the higher clause (p.65). The sentence in (7b') illustrates this claim: "Leslie believes the students to have forgotten the assignment".

4.10 Control Construction:

Another construction that identifies direct objects is the “control construction” with verbs like "persuade," which is shown in (9a) as in “Fiona persuaded Arthur to bake a cake”. An important property of direct objects in this construction is that it is the direct object or the undergoer of the higher clause and the controller of the deleted argument in the embedded infinitive (Van Valin, 2004, p.65).

Conclusion:

This paper has tackled a number of issues concerning grammatical relations hierarchy in the English language. Each language has its own word order, and this is true for English. In this study, different constructions have been examined to illustrate which one of these grammatical relations is the most privileged syntactic argument. The conclusions the paper has come up with can be jotted down as follows:

- 1) In the majority of the analyzed linear orders, the subject is situated at the top of the hierarchy, which is considered the most privileged syntactic argument.
- 2) Concerning “reflexivization”, however, to become the antecedent of the reflexive pronoun is not a unique feature of the subject; it is also the property of the direct object, indirect object, and even non-term.
- 3) With respect to different "extraction constructions" in English, such as WH-question formation, cleft formation, and relative clauses, the subject loses the property of being the most privileged syntactic argument and shares it with other syntactic arguments like a direct object, indirect object, or even non-term. In these constructions, this property is not restricted to a single term type, which is the subject. These syntactic phenomena function as the heads of these constructions, but they are not situated in their canonical position in a sentence.

- 4) In raising construction, in accordance with complex constructions, for instance, “the grammatical relations hierarchy” predicts that if the matrix-coded NP can only have one function in the embedded clause, it should be restricted to subjects only. So the subject is the only privileged syntactic argument in this construction.
- 5) There is a similarity between "control structure" and "conjunction reduction construction". There is a missing argument in both constructions, and the interpretation of the deleted argument is taken from one of the arguments in the main clause.
- 6) In control constructions with verbs like "try" in English, the subject of the matrix clause is the controller because it is the only noun phrase, but with verbs like "persuade," the controller is the direct object of the higher clause, not the subject. The important point in this construction is that the missing argument in the complement clause must be the subject, whether it is the actor of the verbs like "try" or the undergoer of the verbs like "persuade", so the subject is the most privileged syntactic argument in this construction.
- 7) In “conjunction reduction” constructions, the subject is always the controller of the first phrase.
- 8) In the case of direct and indirect objects, their positions are not always those that are predicted by the grammatical relations hierarchy.
- 9) Regarding the four alternations, such as dative shift, transfer alternation, locative alternation, and instrumental alternation, they all show the importance of the direct object in English, and they demonstrate that being the object in these constructions is an important feature of the direct object because in the passive construction there is a promotion of the indirect object to the direct object position then it can be promoted to the subject position, so the direct object is more privileged than the indirect object.
- 10) Concerning "topicalization", the direct object and the indirect object become the topics of the sentence for emphasis, but the topicalized direct object is more acceptable than the indirect object because the indirect object can be topicalized only when it occurs with the preposition "to". When they are topicalized, the syntactic order of the sentence would be OSV.

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په یوهندی ریزمانی پله بهندی له زمانى ئینگلیزیدا

پوخته:

په یوهندی ریزمانی په شیکن له ریزمانی باو (کلاسیک) که چه مکه گرنه گانه کانی وهک بکه، به رکاری راسته و خو و به رکاری ناراسته و خو باس دهکات. ئامانجی سه رکه کی ئه م توئیږینه وهیه بریتیه له خستنه پووی وردی وه سفی بۇ زاراهوی "په یوهندی ریزمانی په کانه" له زمانى ئینگلیزى به پشتبه ستن به تیوری "په یوهندی ریزمانی" که په یوهندی نیوان ئه م پیکهینه رانهی رسته درده خات. په یوهندی ریزمانی پله بهندی له نیوان ئه م پیکهینه رانهی رسته دهکات وهک بکه < به رکاری راسته و خو > به رکاری ناراسته و خو < هیچیان له مانه کی باسکران. بۇ روونکر دنه وهی ئه م چه مکانه کی په یوهندی

رېژمانییه‌کان، ئەم تووژبینه‌وه‌یه هه‌ولده‌دات گرنگی ئەم چه‌مکانه و پله‌بەندی له‌په‌ودانی ئەم ئارگومیتانەدا له‌پیکهاته و دارشته‌ی جیا‌وا‌زدا وه‌سف بکات بۆ ئەوه‌ی پێشینه‌ی دیارده‌ رسته‌سازیه‌کان ده‌ست‌نیشان بکات. پیکهاته‌ی تووژبینه‌وه‌که به‌م شیوه‌یه‌ی خواره‌وه‌یه: یه‌که‌م: زانیاری گشتی له‌باره‌ی چه‌مکی په‌یوه‌ندییه رېژمانییه‌کان و پله‌بەندی په‌یوه‌ندییه رېژمانییه‌کان ده‌خاته‌په‌روو. پاشان هه‌ولده‌دات بیه‌سه‌لم‌ینیت ئایا رېزبه‌ندی وشه‌ی په‌یوه‌ندییه رېژمانییه‌کان له‌زمانی ئینگلیزیدا پابه‌ندی ئەم پله‌بەندییه ده‌بیت یان نا. لیکۆلینه‌وه له‌پیکهاته و دارشته جۆرا‌وجۆره‌کان کراوه به‌مه‌به‌ستی نیشان‌دانی پێگه‌ی ئەم “په‌یوه‌ندییه رېژمانیان” ه و ئەو ژینگه رسته‌سازیه‌ی که پێشینه‌یان هه‌یه که پووبده‌ن. له‌ئەنجامی ئەم تووژبینه‌وه‌یه بۆمان ده‌رده‌که‌ویت که له‌زۆربه‌ی پیکه‌ستنه ئاسۆیه‌ شیکراوه‌کاندا، بکه‌ر له‌لوتکه‌ی پله‌بەندییه‌که‌دا، و له‌پێشینه‌ترین ئارگومیتتی رسته‌سازیه له‌بنیاتی رسته‌ی ئینگلیزیدا. به‌لام، له‌هه‌ندیک گواستنه‌وه و گۆرانکاری رسته‌سازی دیاریکراودا وه‌ک پیکهاته و دارشته‌کانی ره‌نگدانه‌وه و ده‌ره‌ینان، بکه‌ر ئەمپێشینه‌یه له‌ده‌ست ده‌دات و له‌گه‌ڵ ئارگومیتنه رسته‌سازیه‌کانی دیکه‌ی وه‌ک به‌رکاری راسته‌وخۆ و ناراسته‌وخۆدا هاوبه‌شی ده‌کات.

هرمیه‌العلاقات النحویه فی اللغة الانجليزية

الملخص:

جزء من القواعد الكلاسيكي التي تتمحور حول مفاهيم مهمة مثل الفاعل، والمفعول به المباشر، والمفعول به غير المباشر تسمى بالعلاقات النحوية. تهدف الدراسة الى عرض وصف تفصيلي عن "هرمية العلاقات النحوية" في اللغة الإنجليزية بالاعتماد على نظرية "القواعد العلاقة" حيث توضح العلاقة بين تلك الفئات النحوية. تقوم قواعد العلاقة بترتيب افضلية واولوية الهرمية لظواهر النحوية مثل فاعل < مفعول به مباشر < مفعول به غير مباشر < غيرهم من المصطلحات. تبين هذه الدراسة أهمية هذه المفاهيم والتسلسل الهرمي في حدوث الحجج (Arguments) في تراكيب مختلفة من أجل تحديد الظواهر النحوية الأكثر تميزاً. تتكون الدراسة من: أولاً، عرض معلومات عامة حول مفهوم العلاقات النحوية وتسلسل الهرمي للعلاقات النحوية. ثم يحاول ان يثبت ما إذا كان ترتيب الكلمات في العلاقات النحوية في اللغة الإنجليزية يخضع لهذا التسلسل الهرمي او لا. لاطهار حقيقة هذه العلاقات النحوية والبيئات النحوية التي يُفضل حدوثها لقد تم التحقيق في العديد من التركيبات. اظهرت نتائج الدراسة بان في غالبية الأوامر الافقية التي تم تحليلها، يقع الفاعل في أعلى التسلسل الهرمي، وهو الفئة النحوية الأكثر امتيازاً في تركيب الجمل الإنجليزية. لكن، في بعض التحولات النحوية مثل تركيب الانعكاس والاستخراج، فإن الفاعل يفقد هذا الامتياز ويشاركه مع الحجج النحوية الأخرى مثل المفعول به المباشر وغير المباشر.