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A VALENCY GRAMMAR OF ITALIAN

Full-text summary for cross-linguistic comparison

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CHAPTER ONE

Language SYSTEM and TEXT.

1. The difference between *system* and *text* and between *sentence* and *utterance*.

1.1. A preliminary working separation for the purposes of the study

The description of a general language system cannot be based directly on texts, which make use of the system in various ways, depending on the nature and function of the text itself. Let us consider the following texts:

«Ritirarsi quando si è all'apice della carriera. Capita, soprattutto nello sport. Nelle aziende no. Mai. Anzi: [...]» (“Corriere della Sera”, 12.5.1994)

«Ventidue ore dalle Alpi alla Piramide. Quella Cestia, a Roma Ostiense. Partenza da Bressanone, Alto Adige, alle 14 di giovedì e arrivo nella capitale alle 11.50 di ieri tra voli cancellati, treni soppressi, autostrade bloccate. Ecco l'effetto che fa, quando si sente il classico titolo “Italia divisa in due”, a non trovarsi in nessuna delle due, bensì inghiottiti dalla voragine che fa da confine. E che, giovedì, passava da Verona» (in “La Repubblica”, 5.3.2005).

As can be seen, it would be impossible to glean the general structures of Italian directly from this prose. Of course, this is a feature of all languages. While, as is only natural, **communication** needs to hide language structures, we need to refer to **standard structural units** which allow us to observe the internal rules of the system and then compare these units with the form they take in the text.

These standard units are called **sentences**. Some examples are:

Piero sbadiglia

Mario pulisce i vetri

Lo sport giova alla salute

Gli amici regalano un libro a Giulia

Note that each expression has its own complete meaning, however generic or poor it may seem to be. Moreover, there is a **verb** in each of the standard sentences. The presence of the verb cannot be overestimated, as it represents the starting point for any characterization of the way the system, i.e. the sentence, works.

These preliminary observations lead us to identify what we label a **sentence** (Italian: **frase**), or, more precisely, a **canonical sentence**, which can be defined as follows¹:

By **sentence** we mean a linguistic expression constructed following the general rules of the language, which has full (however generic) sense i. even if not combining with other sentences, and ii. without referring to any other communicative situation or sign.

¹ The term *sentence* will be used throughout as the grammatically full synonym of *proposition*.

We can thus move further to define another category of expressions, the **utterances** (Italian: **enunciato**). They comprise text segments, or texts in their own right, which can take any form as long as they acquire specific meanings in that text or in a given context. These expressions we call **utterances** in that they are actually “uttered” (i.e. pronounced) or are assumed to be uttered, in order to communicate a given message. We therefore define an **utterance** as follows.

An **utterance** is any linguistic expression delimited by two clear (phonic or graphic) pauses, which i. is part of a text or stands alone, and ii. has full sense in that it is linked to other utterances or embedded in a given communicative situation.

1.2. *The two perspectives meet*

Drawing a clear division between *system and text* would distract us from studying and accounting for the real nature of language. Distinguishing between *system and text* must therefore be seen as a preliminary step required to identify the language system, which would otherwise be hidden by the specificity of texts. While it is only by understanding the system that we can then precisely understand the specificity of individual texts, it is now time for the **two perspectives of study to meet**, which will enable us to recognise how the author manipulates the language system.

CHAPTER TWO

The Valency Grammar model. The sentence NUCLEUS

2.1. The need for a “model” for language analysis

Sentence structure analysis, as defined here, can only be easily carried out by using a theoretical MODEL able to gather the necessary and sufficient elements required to define the object under investigation on a case-by-case basis. To this purpose, we adopt the VALENCY GRAMMAR model, developed by Lucien Tesnière in the mid-1900s², which provides a clear and convincing framework of analysis to describe the combination of wholes and parts within the sentence.

2.2 The Valency Grammar model: The verb by means of its valencies attracts the “arguments” to itself and forms the NUCLEUS of the sentence.

2.2.1. The sentence as a structure determined by the verb. Properties of the verb and realization of the sentence nucleus

To understand how a sentence is constructed (or “generated”), we need to focus on the **verb** as our starting point, that is the **element which governs the syntactic relations between the main components of the sentence**. The vast amount of information encapsulated in the verb can be grouped into two main subsets:

a) The *meaning* of the verb, or, broadly speaking, the so-called event (an occurrence, a phenomenon, something or someone's way of being, an action, a mental process, a state of mind, etc.).

b) Information on *tense*, *mood*, and *aspect*, which enables us to represent the event.

Moreover, in several languages including Italian, the verb makes use of diverse markers, which indicate *person*, *number*, and sometimes *gender*, in order to link to the so-called ‘subject’.

Verbal meaning encapsulates the event and is, thus, the dynamic, central element which, in the mind of the speaker, sets the sentence in motion.

Knowing the meaning of a verb in his/her own language, the speaker knows (through the general experience of the world he/she lives in) which obligatory elements must be added to the verb in order to build around it a sentence (that is, a semantically complete expression).

Examples:

Let us consider the verb *sbadigliare*. The full sentence *Piero sbadiglia* can be constructed (or generated) provided we know: i. which phenomenon is referred to, and ii. that, to provide the information required, the verb must only combine with an indication of “who” is yawning.

Let us now consider the verb *pulire*. Knowing its meaning, we also know that the action of cleaning calls for expressing “who” cleans “what”, as in *Mario pulisce i vetri*.

² L. Tesnière (1893-1954), *Eléments de syntaxe structurale*, published posthumously in 1959.

Turning to the verb *giovare*, knowing its meaning we also know that it indicates that “someone or something” is good for “someone or something else”, as in *Lo sport giova alla salute*.

Similarly, knowing the meaning of the verb *regalare*, we know that the act of giving requires an indication of “who” gives, “what” they are giving and “to whom”. Hence, the sentence *Gli amici regalano un libro a Giulia*.

2.2.2 *The valencies and arguments of the verb: realization of the sentence nucleus.*

The verb therefore functions as a chemical element with a given “**valency**” number, according to which it can combine with other chemical elements. This property of the verb can thus be defined as follows:

Verb **valency** (or **valence**) refers to the ability of the verb to select the elements it requires in order to build up a fully meaningful sentence.

We can thus identify, within the sentence, those *elements that are specifically linked to the verb* as they fill (or “saturate”) its valencies. When analyzing the sentence, these elements are kept apart from all the others, which serve other functions. They are called **arguments** (or “**actants**”), and can be defined as follows:

Arguments are the elements required to saturate the valencies of the verb within a given sentence structure.

The notions of “valency” and “arguments” enable us to understand the notion of the “simple sentence” or, more to the point, **of sentence NUCLEUS**, i.e. the **basic structure** around which other parts of the sentence can develop.

Before providing an overview of all verb types and of the entire range of valencies, it is worth mentioning that, in the examples above, *sbadigliare* has one single valency, *pulire* and *giovare* have two (with a slightly different relation between the second argument and the verb) and *regalare* has three. It follows that the full sentences below are simple sentences, i.e. they represent the core **nuclei** of sentences that can be extended and expanded.

Piero sbadiglia, Mario pulisce la finestra, Lo sport giova alla salute and Gli amici regalano un libro a Giulia.

2.2.3. *Other relations between arguments and verb: agreement and government*

All the elements linked directly to the verb are arguments. However, they may combine with the verb in various ways. Using the four verbs above and the corresponding sentence nuclei, three different types of links can be identified:

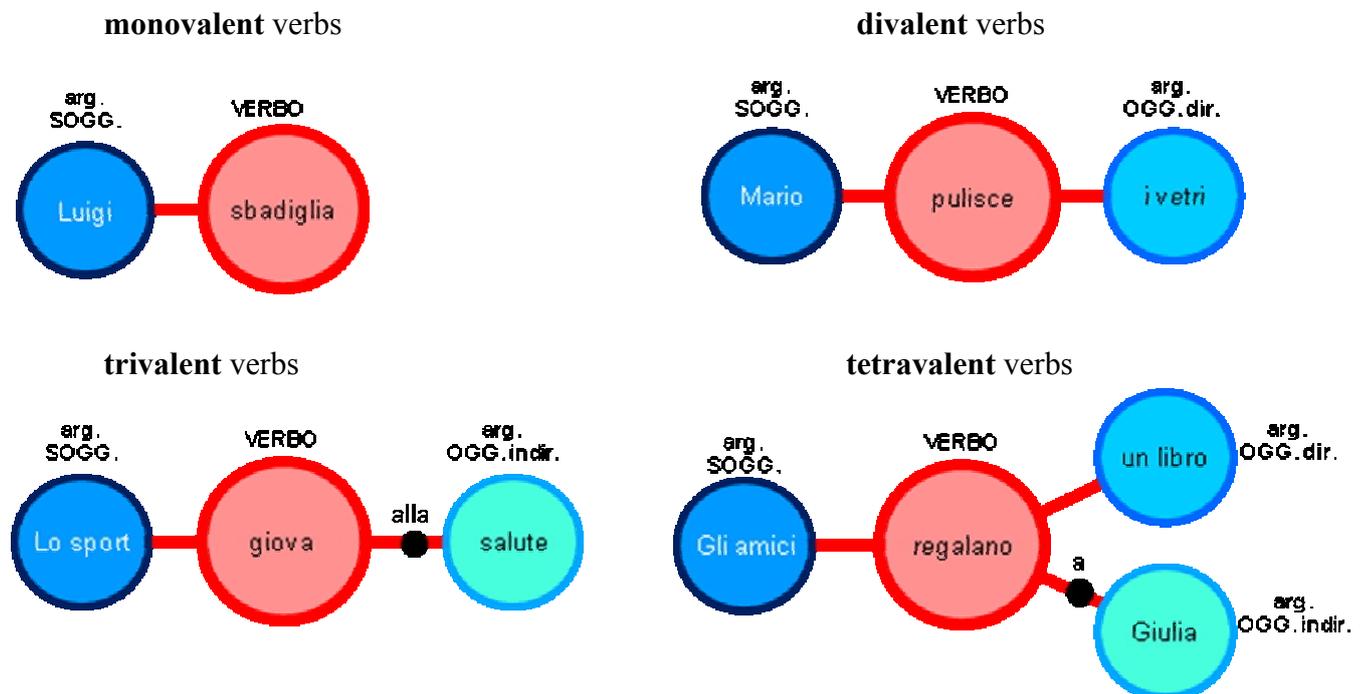
a) In the vast majority of verbs, one argument at least has a privileged relationship with the verb, as it determines (with very few specific exceptions) person and number of the latter verbal form, and therefore morphologically agrees with it. This argument is the **subject** of the verb. It is found in all four of our example sentences: *Piero; Mario; Lo sport; Gli amici*.

b) A large number of verbs also have a second argument that is linked to the verb without a preposition. This argument is the **direct object** of the verb, as in *I vetri*, in example sentence 2, and *un libro*, in example sentence 4.

c) Additionally, several verbs have another (one or two) arguments, linked to the verb by means of a preposition (and realized by an “oblique” argument in the case of personal pronouns). Such arguments are **indirect objects**. For example: *alla salute*, that is, the second argument in example sentence 3, and *a Giulia* (or *a lei/le* if replaced by a personal pronoun), which represents the third argument in example sentence 4.

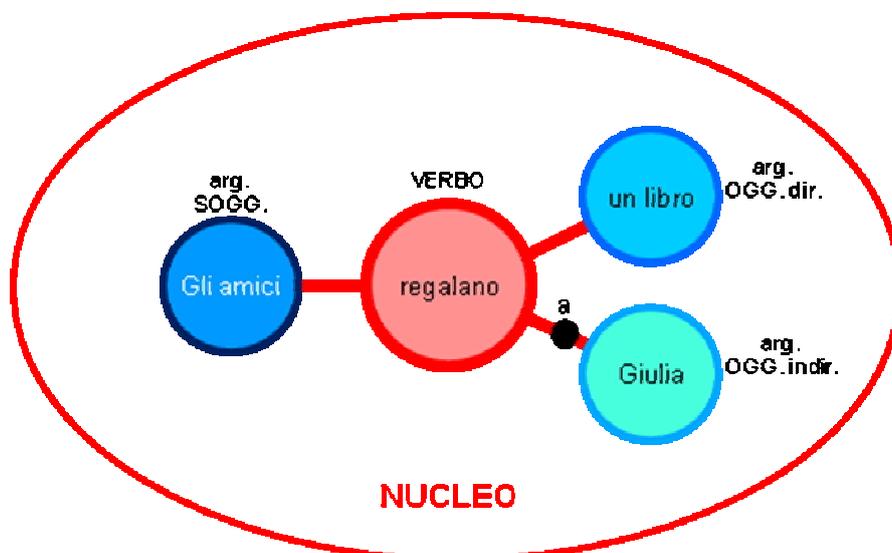
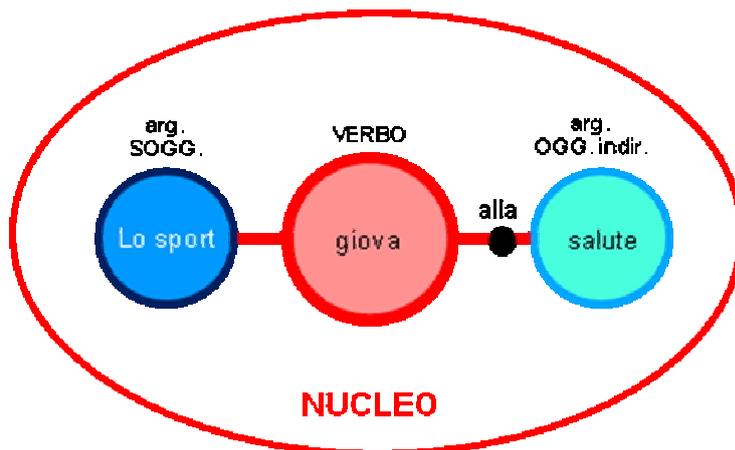
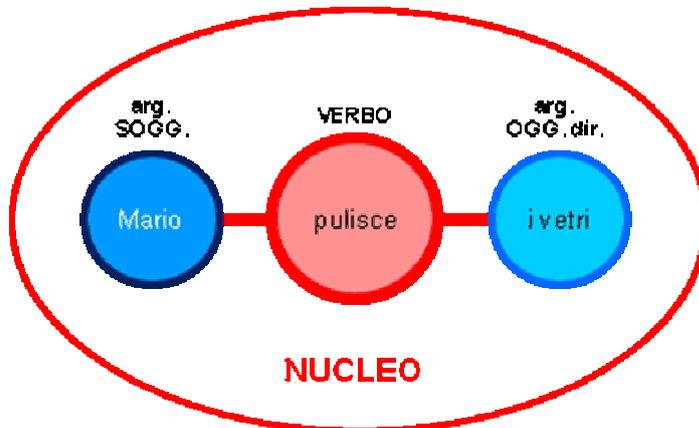
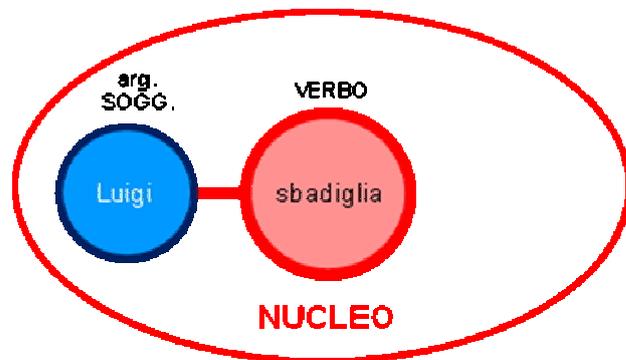
The relation between verb and arguments, subject excluded, is called **government**, and can be **direct** or **indirect** (As will be seen in § 2.5.1, verbs which can take a direct argument can be used in the **passive form** (*Mario pulisce i vetri* > *i vetri sono puliti da Mario*, etc.)³. While these verbs are categorized as **transitive**, all other verbs are **intransitive**.

An analysis of Italian verbs along these lines shows that they can have zero, one, two, three or four valencies, and are accordingly characterized as **avalent** (or **zerovalent**), **monovalent**, **divalent**, **trivalent** and **tetravalent** verbs. While we will investigate this issue later in this work, we provide here a graphical representation of the sample verbs discussed for a better understanding of the respective verb-argument relations:



In all four cases, each set of verbs and related arguments forms the **nucleus** of the corresponding sentences. We shall close each nucleus inside an oval to separate them from that which might lie around them:

³ In English also indirect objects can become subjects of verbs in the passive, eg. My father gave me a car = A car was given to me by my father / I was given a car by my father.



The verb and its arguments are the **central elements of the sentence** and form the sentence nucleus.

2.3. “**Predicative**” verbs versus “**copular**” verbs

In this section we draw a distinction that will be further developed in § 2.6. The verbs discussed so far are “**predicatives**” (or verbs that “predicate”, i.e. express a specific meaning). They represent the largest category of verbs. “**Copular**” verbs form a much smaller group. They act as a “copula”, or a simple link, between the subject and another element which describes a property of the subject. They behave like predicative verbs with two arguments, but show peculiarities that call for a separate discussion.

2.4. A general “**valency-based**” classification of predicative verbs

Depending on their valency, verbs can be categorized into 5 types: **avalent** (or **zerovalent**), **monovalent**, **divalent**, **trivalent** and **tetravalent**.

Avalent verbs are verbs which (in Italian as well as other languages) do not have a subject argument and are traditionally referred to as “impersonal”.⁴ They are not marked for person and number. They are the so-called weather verbs (e.g. *piovere*, *nevicare*, *grandinare*), which do not require a subject to fully represent the respective phenomena. Thus, *piove*, *nevicca*, or *grandina* are semantically complete expressions in their own right. They are sentences.

Among the **monovalent verbs**, or verbs with subject argument only, are *sbadigliare*, discussed above, and verbs like *tossire*, *russare*, *nascere*, *morire*, *vivere* (meaning ‘being alive’), *splendere*, *brillare*, *scoppiare*, *abbaiare*, *miagolare*, *vagire*, *starnutire*, etc.

Divalent verbs, where a second argument adds to the subject, can be subcategorized by direct or indirect government. Verbs like *pulire*, *sporcare*, *tagliare*, *amare*, *odiare*, *leggere*, *scrivere*, *dipingere*, etc. have a second direct argument. Verbs like *giovare*, *piacere*, *spettare*, *andare* (as in ‘heading for a place’) have a second indirect argument.

Next to the subject, **trivalent verbs** can have a second direct argument and a third indirect argument. Some examples are *regalare*, discussed above, and *dare*, *attribuire*, *dire*, *dichiarare*, *inserire*, *mettere*, *collocare*. However, a subset of this type can have both second and third indirect arguments: *andare* (‘moving from one place to another’), or *passare* (as in *passare dalla tranquillità alla disperazione*).

Tetravalent verbs have one direct argument and two indirect second arguments: *tradurre*, *trasferire*, *spostare qualcosa da ... a...*

⁴ Such verbs do not exist in English, where the subject of the verb has always to be expressed, unless in imperative forms.

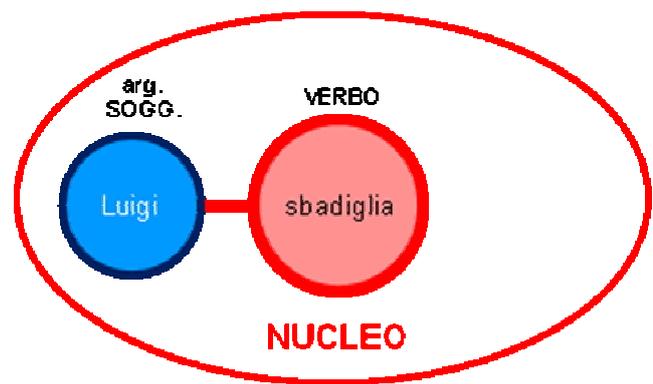
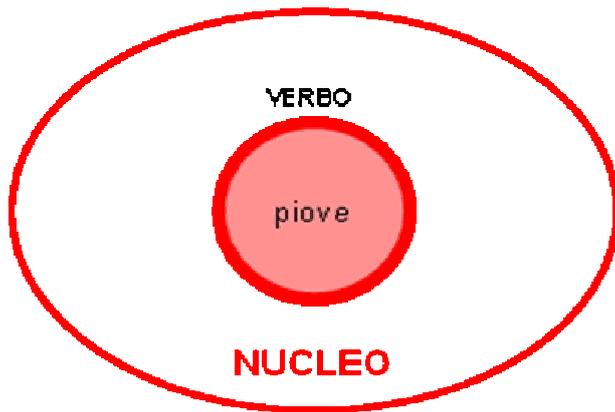
Therefore, as shown, taking into account both types and subtypes, a total of 7 sets or predicative verbs can be distinguished. They are represented in the figure below along with a description of their behaviour and relevant examples:

avalent without arguments *Piove*

monovalent with one Subject argument
Luigi sbadiglia

**VERBI ZEROVALENTI
(senza alcun argomento)**

**VERBI MONOVALENTI
(con solo arg. SOGG.)**



Frase: *Piove.*

Frase: *Luigi sbadiglia.*

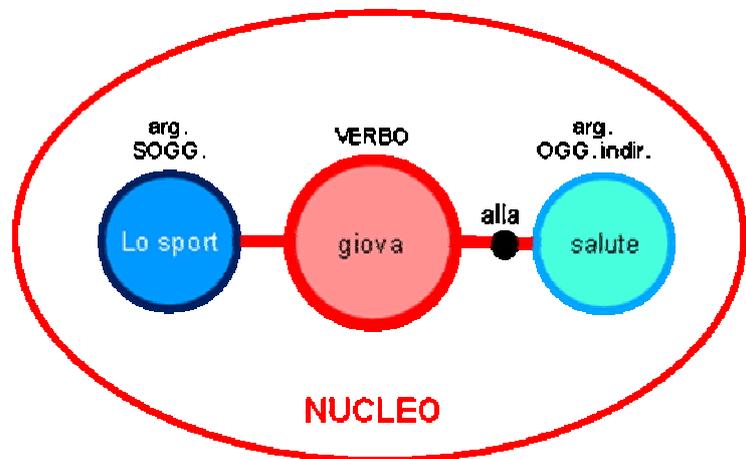
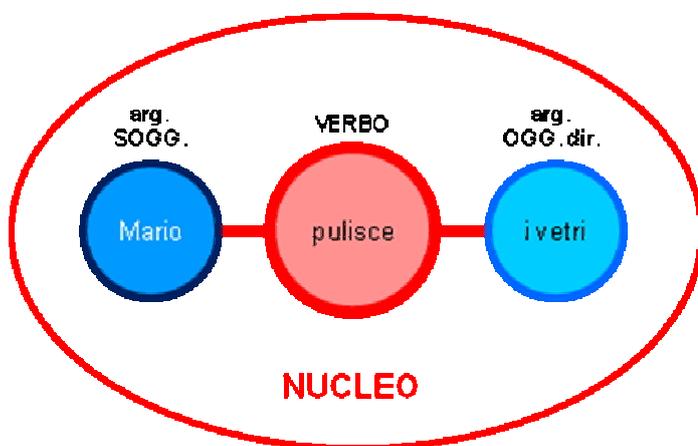
divalent with Subject arg. and 1 direct arg.
with Subject arg. and 1 indirect arg.

Mario pulisce i vetri
(passive: *i vetri sono puliti da Mario*)

Lo sport giova alla salute

**VERBI BIVALENTI
(con arg. SOGG. e 1 argom. OGG. diretto)**

**VERBI BIVALENTI
(con arg. SOGG. e 1 arg. OGG. indiretto)**



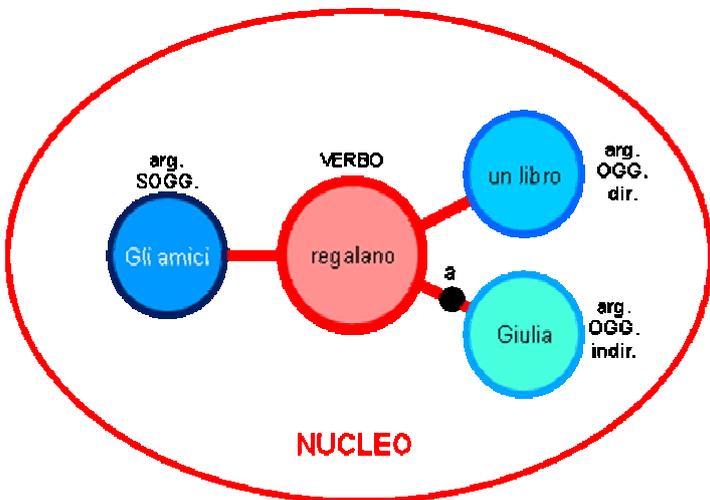
Frase: *Mario pulisce i vetri.*

Frase: *Lo sport giova alla salute.*

trivalent with subject arg., 1 direct arg. and 1 indirect arg. *Gli amici regalano un libro a Giulia*
 (passive: *un libro è regalato dagli amici a Giulia*)

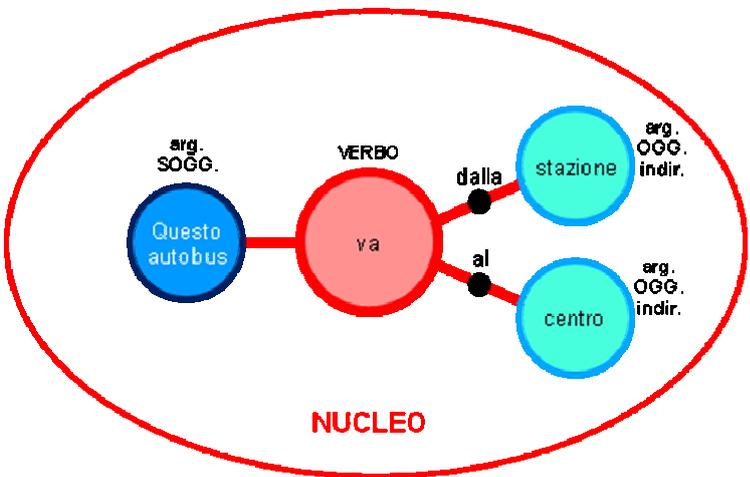
with Subject arg. and 2 indirect arg. *Questo autobus va dalla stazione al centro*

VERBITRIVALENTI
 (con arg. SOGG., 1 arg. OGG. diretto e 1 arg. OGG. indiretto)



Frase: *Gli amici regalano un libro a Giulia.*

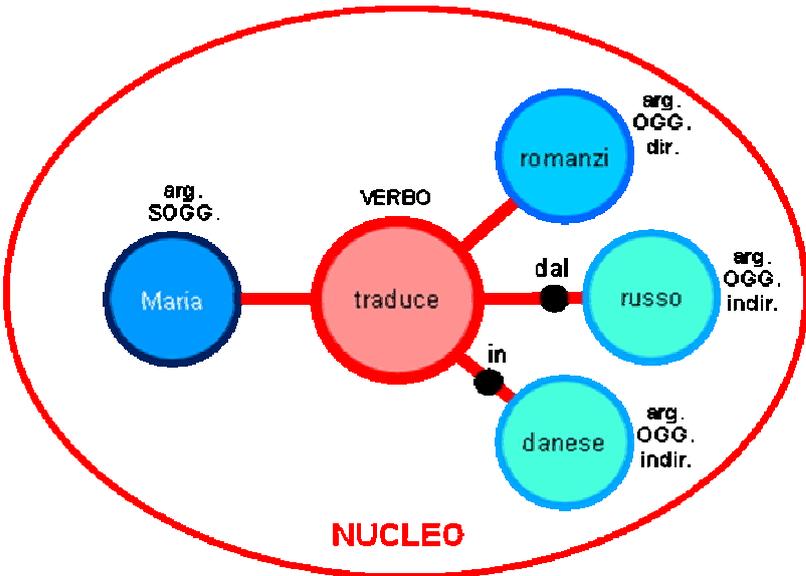
VERBITRIVALENTI
 (con arg. SOGG. e 2 arg. OGG. indiretti)



Frase: *Questo autobus va dalla stazione al centro.*

tetravalent with Subject arg., 1 direct arg. and 2 indirect arg. *Maria traduce romanzi dal dal russo al danese* (passive: *romanzi sono tradotti dal russo in danese da Maria*)

VERBITETRAVALENTI
 (con arg. SOGG., 1 arg. OGG. diretto e 2 arg. OGG. indiretti)



2.5. Explaining valencies

2.5.1. Transitive and intransitive verbs. The passive construction

The classic distinction between **transitive** and **intransitive** constructions/verbs is based on one easily recognisable property of verbs: transitive verbs have a direct object and allow the sentence to be converted from an active to a passive construction (or “voice”).

Since a simple test for transitive verbs is to convert them into passive-voice verbs, in this section we shall investigate the forms of the passive construction and its functions in constructing a text.

Italian has two **passive constructions**:

1) The “standard” construction, in which the direct object of the active sentence converts to the subject, the subject of the active sentence turns into the agent, and the verb takes the passive voice (*Oggi Mario pulisce i vetri* > *Oggi i vetri sono puliti da Mario*);

2) The “**si**”-passive construction, in which the direct object turns into the subject, while the verb - which is preceded by *si* and agrees with the subject -, retains the active voice, and the agent (i.e. the subject in the active voice) is regularly omitted (*Oggi si puliscono i vetri*).

The passive voice is used in particular to omit the agent (i.e. the person or fact we consider to be the “agent”, or the starting point of the event). By uttering *Oggi si puliscono i vetri*, we foreground the action rather than the person who carries out the action. As a matter of fact, quite often we do not know, do not wish or do not deem it relevant to express the agent. Consider, in this respect, expressions such as *la strada è stata riaperta*, *il ponte è stato distrutto*, *l'appartamento è stato venduto*. In the Italian *si* construction, the agent is hardly ever expressed, as this would be perceived as unnatural (or it would be seen as a feature of literary style): *in quel mercato si vendono [dai contrabbandieri] le borse contraffatte*.

Next to passive voice constructions, the so-called **cleft sentences** represent another way to foreground the object (or point of arrival) of the event in a given scene. In this very old construction – which, with the exception of highly formal texts, is still especially common in Italian - the object realizes the “theme” (identified either in advance or later in the text), the theme is then repeated using a pronoun in the subsequent sentence (the “rheme”, or ‘discourse’), and the verb retains the active voice, with the agent as the subject: *I vetri li pulisce Mario*. This construction is a clear instance of a textual strategy.

2.5.2. Changes in meaning correlate with changes in valency. The absolute use of verbs.

Multiple word meanings are a feature of language. Their original meaning may change through usage, and older meanings may be replaced or coexist with newer ones. This is also true of verbs. While changing meanings, they may also change valency number.

This is a key feature of so-called **absolute use** of verbs. To take one example, compare the following sentences: *Il mio bambino legge una favola* and *Il mio bambino legge*. As can be seen, the verb *legge* has two different meanings, most notably: “he is reading a fairy tale” in the former, and “he is able to read, he has learned how to read” in the latter. Likewise for *Paola dipinge paesaggi* as against *Paola dipinge*, or *Pietro lavora il marmo* as against *Pietro lavora* (meaning: ‘he

is a good worker’, ‘he is at work’, or ‘he got a job’). Several verbs can be used in the “absolute” (and yet, specific) meaning, which does not require a second argument. They therefore turn into monovalent verbs.

The other way round, monovalent verbs turn into direct or indirect divalent verbs when used with a different meaning. This is the case of *vivere*. In its primary use, “being alive”, it is a monovalent verb (*Ada vive*). Additionally, however, it has come to mean ‘to live, reside, in a place’ (*Ada vive a Milano*), or ‘to maintain oneself alive, to support oneself’ (*Paolo vive di rendita*; or, figuratively, *Gino vive di ricordi*). In both its secondary uses, *vivere* is a divalent verb with a second indirect argument. Third, when meaning ‘to experience a situation intensely’ or ‘to work hard at a task or activity’, the verb *vivere* is a divalent verb with a second direct argument: *I ragazzi hanno vissuto una brutta esperienza o vivono lo sport*.

Worthy of note are aivalent verbs which turn into divalent or even trivalent verbs when used figuratively. Take the verb *piovere*. Whereas it is an aivalent verb in its original meaning, it is a monovalent verb when used in expressions like *Piovono sassi* or *Piovono rimproveri*. In a similar manner, the verb *tuonare* is aivalent in its primary, original meaning, but turns into a trivalent verb in expressions like *Il direttore tuona i suoi ordini ai dipendenti*.

2.5.3 Measurement indications are not arguments but measure the meaning of the verb.

Few verbs require a non-prepositional argument, and yet cannot convert into passive voice constructions with the same meaning. Verbs like *durare*, *costare*, *pesare*, *valere*, *misurare* belong here. The basic requirement is that the verb be followed by a “measurement” indication. This is as a rule the indication of a specific amount: *Il film dura 2 ore*; *Quel cappotto costa 1000 euro*; *Il pacco pesa 2 chilogrammi*; *L'appartamento vale 1 milione di euro*; *il lato del palazzo misura 18 metri*. Additionally, non-prepositional arguments can be substituted for by adverbs referring an unspecified quantity (...*dura molto*; ... *costa quanto il tuo* or *più del tuo* or *costa caro*; etc.), which provides evidence in favour of their adverbial function. Consider the different meanings of the verb *pesare*. *Pesare* translates as “having a weight” in the examples above, where it has one single measurement argument. However, it may also have other meanings, e.g. “to burden with (one’s own) weight or loads”. Here, *pesare* requires an indirect argument which describes ‘where’ the weight or load is resting (*la cupola pesa sui pilastri*; or, figuratively, *questo fatto pesa sulla mia coscienza*). A secondary meaning is “to weigh an object”. Here, *pesare* has a direct object argument, and can thus convert into the passive voice (*questo pacco è stato pesato sulla bilancia della dogana*).

Although the verb *distare* is a member of the same category, it is a trivalent verb in that its basic construction also requires the argument to indicate the point from which the distance is measured: *la stazione dista 3 chilometri dal centro*. (It should be noted that while *la stazione dista dal centro* cannot be a full sentence, *dista 3 chilometri* is only found when we know the point from which the distance is measured.)

Some measurement verbs (e.g. *valere*, *pesare*, *costare*, *durare*) are often used with absolute meanings (see § 2.5.3.). Because they denote a high degree or a relevant value, only the subject argument is required: *Mario vale*; *questo vestito costa*; *questa valigia pesa*; *il bel tempo dura*.

2.6. Copular verbs

So far we have seen that the structure and behaviour of all verbs can be accounted for in terms of their valency. In this section we concentrate on the crucial two-fold distinction drawn in § 2.3.

The verbs discussed so far belong to the more populated verbal category of Italian (and other languages as well). They are called **predicative verbs** because, as illustrated by the sample set above (ranging from *piovvere* to *tradurre*), they have a specific meaning and “predicate” something specific.

One further type can be identified. It is relatively underrepresented and comprises verbs that have a very generic meaning, e.g. *essere* (when not used in the sense of ‘to exist’ or ‘to be located [in a place]’), *sembrare*, *parere*, *apparire* (meaning ‘to seem, appear’), *divenire*, *diventare*, *risultare*. Within the Valency Grammar model, these verbs show one particular requirement: next to the first argument (subject), predicative verbs require an adjective or noun as their second argument, which describes a feature, quality or property of the subject, and which therefore agrees in number and gender with the subject. Some examples are:

Piero è stanco

Giulia sembra contenta

Le pere diventano mature

These verbs are known as **copular verbs** (from the Latin *copula*, ‘tie’, and, therefore ‘link’), as they serve as a link between the two elements (*Piero...stanco*; etc.), while also introducing other meanings which are normally encapsulated in the verb, that is time, manner and aspect. In copular verbs information on the subject is therefore predicated (supplied) by the nominal element combining with the subject, or **predicative subject complement**, which is traditionally called “nominal predicate”,

Sometimes, the predicative complement may in turn require other complements. For example, in the sentence *Luigi è abile*, what is missing is the indication of what exactly he is skilled at. Additions such as *in disegno*, *negli affari*, or *nelle trattative* are thus needed. Similar examples are *Ugo è stato mediatore tra le parti*, or *Luisa è stata molto attenta alle mie parole*.

With the copular verbs *seem* and *feel* the predicative subject complement can also take the infinitive form of the verb. Accordingly, *Mario sembra sofferente* may turn into *Mario sembra soffrire*, and, similarly, *Luisa pare spazientita* is approximately equivalent to *Luisa pare spazientirsi*. As will be seen in (§ 2-11), copular constructions resembles completive constructions.

2.7. Copular uses of primarily predicative verbs

The meaning of many predicative verbs can change and thus enable them to behave like copular verbs. Let us take a few examples. In the sentence *La sua data di nascita risulta dai documenti*, the verb *risultare* is predicative and means ‘to come out from, to be gathered from’. By contrast, in the sentence *Piero è risultato vincitore*, the verb *risultare* retains part of its predicative meaning (in that the recognition ‘comes out’ of a contest or competition), but also includes the typical meaning of the verb *essere*, because Pietro ‘is’ the winner. Consider also the two examples below, for which we provide an explanation in bracket. (Single underlining is used for copular verbs.)

Maria è andata a casa Rossi

(‘she went in the direction of’)

<i>Maria è andata sposa in casa Rossi</i>	(‘she entered a new family and <u>became</u> Mrs Rossi)
<i>Paolo ha fatto il concorso da avvocato</i>	(‘he sat the exam...’)
<i>Paolo fa l’avvocato</i>	(‘he <u>is</u> ’).

Furthermore, primarily predicative monovalent verbs, such as *nascere*, *vivere*, and *morire*, can turn into copular verbs and be followed by a predicative subject complement, as in *nascere ricco* (‘to be born to a rich family’), *vivere beato*, *morire povero*. Many verbs used with an absolute meaning (which are thus equivalent to monovalent verbs, cf. § 2-5.3), show the same behaviour in that the predicative complement is often preceded by *da*, *come*, *in qualità di*, etc. Some examples are: *Sette consiglieri su dodici costituiscono la maggioranza*; *Ugo fa il buono*; and, similarly, *fare il furbo*, *lavorare da falegname*, *studiare da direttore d’orchestra*, *agire* or *comportarsi da galantuomo*, *parlare come esperto*, *arrivare primo* (or *ultimo*) or *per primo* (or *per ultimo*).

2.8. Verbs requiring an "enriched" argument

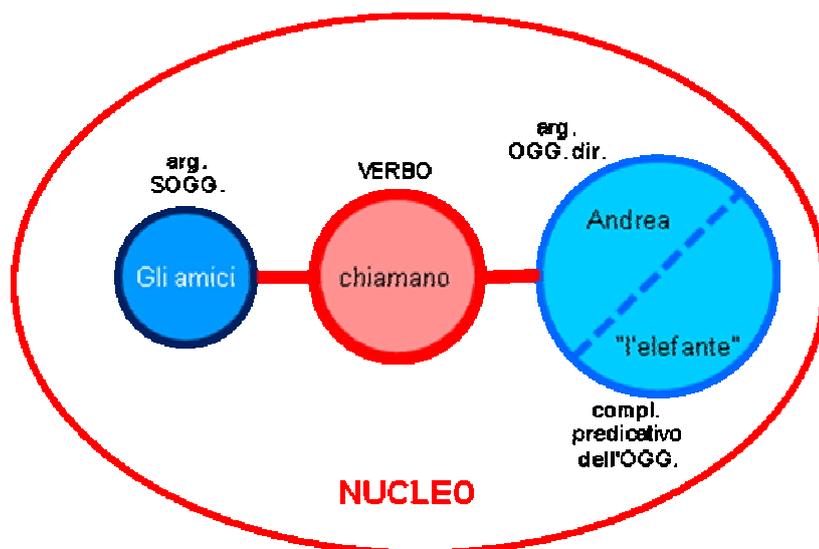
Some divalent predicative verbs require a direct object argument, to which another element is added. To take one example, when meaning ‘saying the name of someone or something’, the verb *nominare* requires a simple direct object, as in *L’imputato ha nominato il complice*. However, when meaning ‘to appoint someone to an office or designate someone for a task’, *nominare* requires the direct object to combine with an indication of the office or task, as in *Il sindaco ha nominato Luigi assessore*. This further element, which can be either a noun or an adjective, is the **predicative complement**, or an added element which predicates a requirement or quality of a person or thing. It is a feature of:

- “**appellative**” verbs: *chiamare*, *denominare*, *dire*, etc. (e.g., *Gli amici chiamano Andrea “l’elefante”*);
- “**opinion**” verbs: *stimare*, *considerare*, *giudicare*, *credere*, *ritenere*, *prendere per* (or *come*), etc. (e.g., *Maria mi considera il suo migliore amico*, or ... *come un fratello*; *I cronisti hanno ritenuto falsa la notizia*);
- “**naming**” verbs: *eleggere*, *nominare*, *dichiarare*, *proclamare*, *scegliere*, etc. (e.g., *Gli studenti hanno eletto Giulia capoclasse*);
- “**effective**” verbs: *fare*, *creare*, *rendere*, *assumere come*, etc. (e.g., *La ditta ha assunto Laura come cassiera*).

Since they are divalent verbs with a direct object (or transitive verbs), they can be used in the passive voice. If this is the case, then the object turns into the grammatical subject, the subject turns into the agent and the predicative complement continues to refer to the latter, as in *Andrea è chiamato “l’elefante” dagli amici*; *Laura è stata assunta come cassiera dalla ditta*.

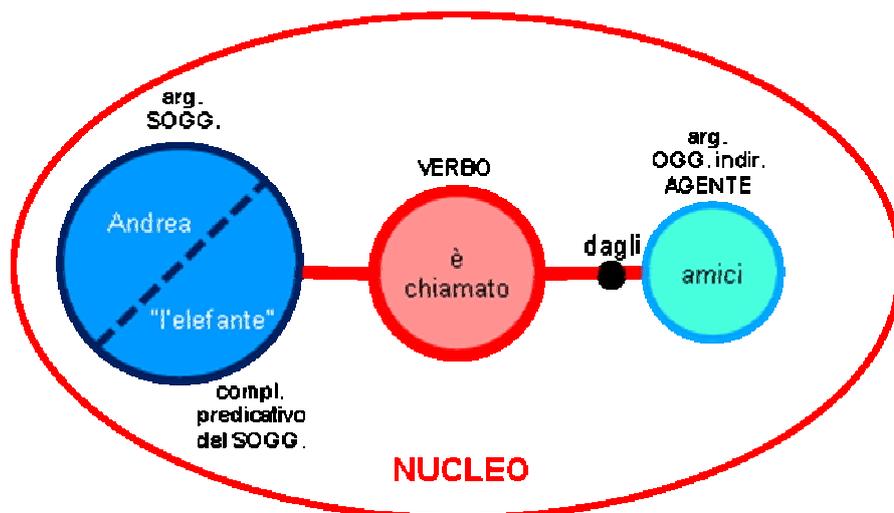
This kind of sentence may be graphically represented as follows:

active voice



Frase: *Gli amici chiamano Andrea "l'elefante".*

passive voice



Frase: *Andrea è chiamato "l'elefante" dagli amici.*

2.9. Pronominal verbs

While some verbs also allow for atonic personal pronouns (*mi, ti, si, ci, vi, si*), others are exclusively used with the latter, e.g. *lavarsi, vestirsi, alzarsi, offendersi, ribellarsi, pentirsi, stupirsi, ricordarsi, addormentarsi, annoiarsi, svegliarsi, allontanarsi*. Broadly speaking, the pronominal form of the verb indicates that the event described concerns the subject in particular, whether the subject participates actively and deliberately in the event (*lavarsi, vestirsi, alzarsi, ribellarsi, allontanarsi*, etc.), or is (more or less involuntarily) affected by the event (*offendersi, pentirsi, ricordarsi, addormentarsi, annoiarsi, ammalarsi*, etc.). These forms are in the so-called **middle voice**, which expresses either i. the material effects of a voluntary act on the subject (as in **reflexive** verbs: *Maria si pettina*) or ii. (also with inanimate subjects) the intense “participation” of the

subject in the event described by the verb: *Lino si è ammalato; Il vaso si è rotto*. Pronominal forms that are often found in constructions like *Mi bevo un caffè, Mi vedo un film giallo, Mi godo la vacanza* hold the same function.

The pronoun attaching to the verb has an “event intensifying” or “event-subjectivizing” function.

2.10. "Accompanying" verbs

Verbs and verb phrases comprising two closely associated verbs are also common. Of the two verbs, one expresses a specific meaning and the other “accompanies” the former while serving a number of possible functions. Verbal auxiliaries represent the simplest case (*essere, avere* and, sometimes, *andare* and *venire*). They are used to create composite verb forms (e.g., the present perfect). Obviously, the two elements only constitute one verb, which does not pose particular problems. (Note, however, that sometimes an adverb or conjunction is placed between the auxiliary and the past participle (*però, anche, anzi, perfino, tuttavia, etc.*.)

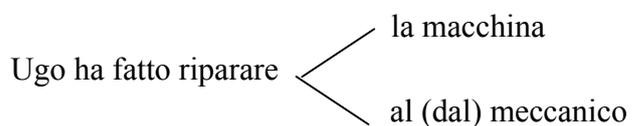
By contrast, the combination of a lexical verb with verbs with special meanings and functions returns an entirely different picture. The following categories can be distinguished:

- **modal verbs**, which add a “modality” to the concept expressed by the following verb: *potere, dovere, volere, sapere, solere* (or *esser solito*). E.g., *Lucio può partire; Mara deve restare; Piero vuole mangiare; Claudia sa rispondere: l'edificio potrebbe cadere*. All these verbs add a “modality” to the main verb, showing the attitude or the behaviour of the subject.

- **causative verbs** (*fare* and *lasciare*), which indicate that someone “makes someone else do something” or “allows someone else to do something”. E.g.: *Paolo mi ha fatto comprare questo libro; Mara mi ha lasciato decidere liberamente*.

The coupling of the two verbs shows that somebody “makes” somebody else do something or “allows” somebody else to do something.

The addition of the causative verb to the main verb produces a verbal expression which has obtained an extra valency. The verb *riparare* is bivalent in the sentence *Ugo ha riparato la macchina*; but in the sentence *Ugo ha fatto riparare la macchina al (or dal) meccanico* the construction is trivalent, as can be seen by the following diagram:



- **aspectual verbs** (mainly *stare* and *stare per, mettersi a, smettere di, accingersi a, prendere a*), which indicate that something “is underway”, “is about to begin”, “has just started”, “is about to end” or “has just ended”. E.g., *sta piovendo* or *sta per piovere; ha cominciato a piovere; l'avvocato sta finendo di parlare* or *ha appena finito di parlare; continua a piovere; Ugo ha smesso di fumare*.

2.11. Substituting and transforming nominal arguments. "Completive" sentences

2.11.1 Arguments take different forms

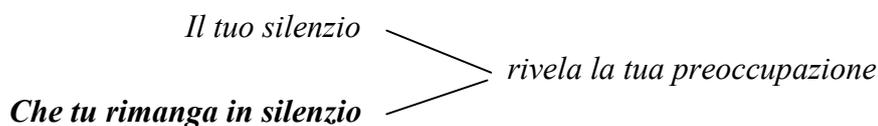
Nouns (or any other part of speech which can be converted to a noun) function as arguments of the verb. However, they can be replaced by arguments with different forms, most notably: pronouns, some adverbs, as well as clauses.

Quite simply, pronouns replacing nouns and adverbs replacing an indication of place can be accounted for as follows. In sentences like *Paolo chiama Maria, lei* or the atonic pronoun *la* may replace the second argument, *Maria*. Likewise, in *Piero ha messo le chiavi nel cassetto*, the third argument, *nel cassetto*, may be replaced using the adverbs *qui* (or *qua*) and *lì* (or *là*), which are perfectly acceptable when used of a place that we can see or has already been mentioned.

Clauses that substitute for an argument when particular verbs constitute the core of the nucleus, represent a slightly more complex case. Since they function as arguments and complete the nucleus, they are called **completives**. As can be seen from the overview below, (I) the clauses that replace the subject argument are called **subject clauses**. Furthermore, (II) different clause types may substitute for the direct object argument, most notably: **direct object clauses, direct or indirect interrogatives, declaratives in direct or indirect speech, imperative clauses**. Third, (III) **indirect object clauses** are clauses that substitute for the indirect object argument.

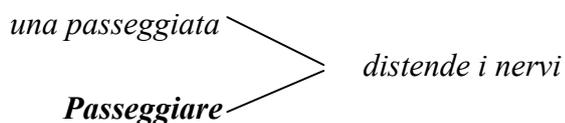
I. SUBJECT CLAUSES

1. Subject clauses formed by *che* + (subjunctive) finite form of the verb.



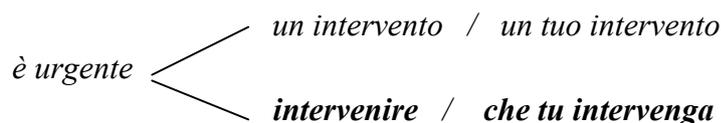
(It will be noted that the subject clause starting with the conjunction *che* originated in expressions like *Il fatto che ...*, in which *fatto*, the head noun, is followed by an object clause, cf. § 3.11.5.)

2. Subject clauses in the simple infinitive



3. Subject clauses with verb in the simple infinitive, verb in the simple infinitive introduced by *di*, or finite verb (in the subjunctive) preceded by *che*, when the third person singular nuclear verbs are *basta, bisogna, capita, succede, piace, dispiace, costa, giova, importa*, etc., or the nucleus is realized by expressions like *è giusto, è urgente, è bello, sembra giusto*, etc. The subject clause typically follows the nuclear verb and such an unusual word structure makes us feel the verb as impersonal:





When combining with verbs like *capita*, *succede*, *accade*, the infinitive of the subject clause is preceded by *di* (*mi capita di dimenticare la luce accesa*).

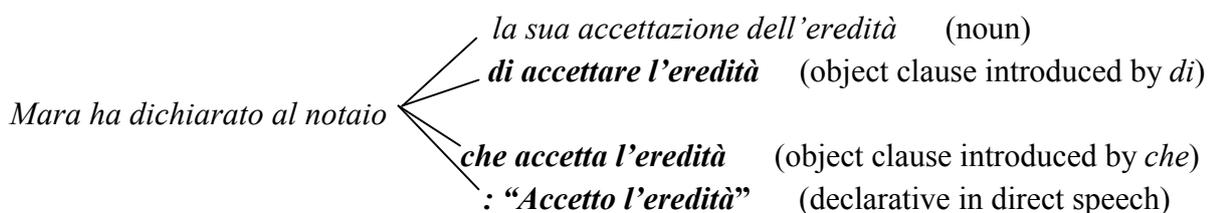
When no argument in the nucleus refers to the party involved in the event, the subject clause in the infinitive expresses a **generic subject**. This is the case of *Basta accettare verbalmente* (as compared to *Ti basta accettare verbalmente*). Additionally, reference can be made to a generic subject using the verb in the finite, impersonal form, e.g. *Basta che **si accetti** verbalmente*.

With *sembra*, *pare* and the passives *si dice*, *si pensa*, the subject clause can be in the infinitive (with aivalent verbs only). Additionally, the *che*-subjunctive can be used (and *che* can be omitted in highly formal registers), when the verbal subject of the subject clause is dislocated and anticipated: *Sembra piovere* versus *Sembra che piova*; *Si dice che Andrea sia partito* versus *Andrea pare sia partito*.

What should not go unnoticed is that in sentences such as *È urgente comprare i biglietti*, *Mi è utile leggere i libri*, *Mi è successo di perdere i bagagli* and the like, the phrases *comprare i biglietti*, *leggere i libri*, *perdere i bagagli* form the subject clause, or, in other words, function as the subject.

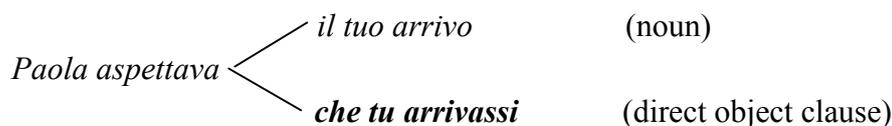
II. OBJECT CLAUSES

1. Diverse types of direct object clauses, and autonomous sentences in direct speech. They replace the noun as the direct object argument.



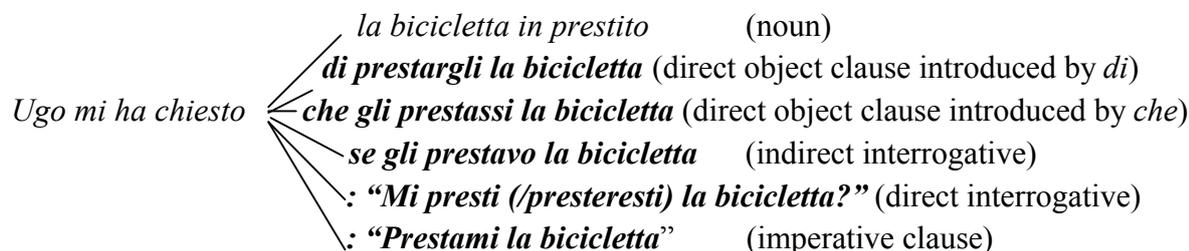
Note that in the example above *Mara* is the subject of the verbs, both in the two-object clause and in the direct speech sentence.

2. Direct object clauses formed by *che* + another subject and a finite verb. They replace the noun as the direct object argument. The verb of the nucleus is divalent.



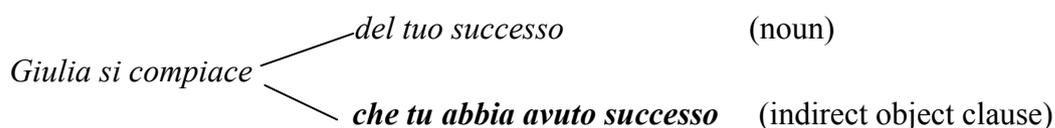
The subject of the verb of the object clause (*tu*) must be expressed because it differs from the subject of the nuclear verb and, additionally, *arrivassi* is used for both the first and second person singular.

3. Diverse types of direct object clauses or independent direct speech sentences replacing the noun as the direct object argument. The nuclear verb is trivalent.



III. INDIRECT OBJECT CLAUSE

1. Indirect object clauses with a divalent verb, formed by *che* + another subject and a finite verb. They replace the noun as the direct object argument.



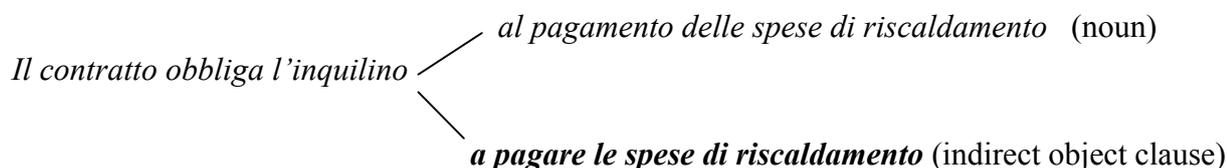
As can be seen, indirect object clauses replacing an indirect argument have the same form as direct object clauses. The verb in **object clauses** may be in the infinitive or, depending on the meaning of the controlling verb, take a finite indicative or subjunctive for:

- The **infinitive** is used when the subject of the object clause is “hidden” in a preceding element, be it (i) the subject of the main verb (*Paolo mi ha promesso di venire*: it is Paolo himself that will come), or (ii) the indirect object, with verbs that attach a task, condition or the like to it. For example: *Paolo ha chiesto a Luigi di venire*, where Luigi is involved in the action of coming. An object clause used in the infinitive is an **implicit** object clause.

- When the conditions licensing the implicit object clause do not apply, the object clause requires the **finite form** of the verb and a specified, if only morphologically expressed, subject: *Paolo sa che (tu) verrai*; *Paolo vuole che tu venga*. In this case the object clause is called **explicit**.

What cannot go unnoticed is that the subject of the subjunctive must be specified with the first, second and third person singular present subjunctive (e.g. *tu abbia avuto* ... above), as the verb cannot distinguish the three persons singular by and of itself.

2. Indirect object clauses with trivalent verbs formed by *a* + infinitive and replacing the noun as the direct object argument.



Although the subject of the verb in the object clause is different from the subject of the nuclear verb, it is not expressed in that it can be gleaned from the direct argument (*l'inquilino*).

2.11.2. Object clauses depending on verbs of visual or auditory perception

As a rule, verbs like *sentire*, *ascoltare*, *vedere*, *guardare*, *osservare* require that one element be added to the argument to provide specific information on the latter. Although it may be a nominal element (usually a prepositional phrase), it is more often realized by an object clause. Compare, in this respect,

Paola ha visto la nave

where Paola has only seen “the ship”, and

Paola ha visto  *la nave in arrivo*
*la nave arrivare / arrivare la nave / che la nave
arrivava / che arrivava la nave*

where specific information is given on “the arrival”, and the object clause conveys this type of detail more effectively.

2.11.3. Object clauses depending on nouns or adjectives

Several nouns and adjectives with about the same meaning as the corresponding verbs, may be followed by an implicit or explicit object clause. Implicit object clauses are used when the subject of the object clause is also the subject of the governing verb:

Speravo di rivedere Anna
La mia speranza di rivedere Anna
Ero fiducioso di rivedere Anna

Speravo che Anna tornasse
Avevo speranza che Anna tornasse
Ero fiducioso che Anna tornasse

CHAPTER THREE

Sentence extensions The nucleus CIRCUMSTANTS

3.1. The sentence extensions.

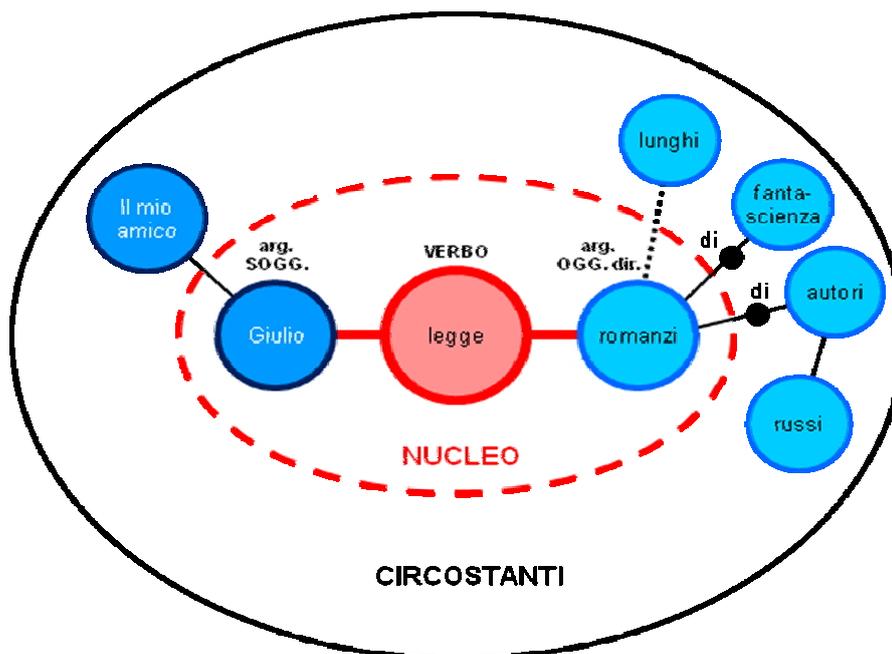
To enrich the information within the sentence we can add to the **nucleus** some elements that are defined:

- (α) “**nucleus circumstants**” if they are specifically linked to the single nucleus constituents
- (β) “**nucleus extentions**” if they are freely placed beside the nucleus as a whole, that is without a specific syntactic link with its constituents.

3.2. The nucleous circumstants

The **nucleus circumstants** specify directly the verb or the single arguments and are linked directly to them. For example, to the verb *piove* we can add the adverb *fortemente*, or the the adverbial expressions *a dirotto*, *a catinelle*; to the verb *funziona*, referred, for example to a device, we can add the adverbs *bene* or *male* or the adverbial expressions such as *alla perfezione* or *a mala pena*. The single arguments of the verb can be combined with elements that specify them, so that in the sentence *Giulio legge romanzi* we can add a series of information directly linked to the various arguments: *Il mio amico* *Giulio* *legge* *lunghi* *romanzi* *di fantascienza* *di autori russi*

In our diagrams, these added elements can be combined as follows:



As can be seen, each of the added elements is linked to one of the nucleus **primary constituents** but is placed in an **outer** segment to the nucleus. For this reason we have called them **NUCLEUS**

CIRCUMSTANTS and to show the links they have with the nucleus constituents we have broken the continuous line of the red oval.

Around the entire new figure we have drawn a second oval with black solid line; beyond this line lie the added elements of the other type (the **expansions**, outlined in Chapter 4).

3.3. Types of circumstants.

3.3.1. *A comprehensive review*

As already seen with the examples outlined, the elements added directly to the nucleus constituents can be of two types:

adverbs or **adverbial expressions**, which are linked to the verb;

articles, adjectives, participles, nouns, prepositional expressions, relative clauses, which are linked to the nominal arguments (nouns and pronouns). For articles and other determinants (demonstrative and possessive adjectives), see 1 § 3.3.3.

The way the circumstants are linked to the constituents is various and needs to be examined distinctly with reference to the verbs and arguments.

3.3.2. *The circumstants of the verbs*

The verb can be accompanied by **adverbs** and **adverbial expressions** introduced by prepositions that are not linking elements of the expression to the verb, but constituent elements of the same expression (for example *a dritto, di corsa, a precipizio, all'istante, in ritardo, di soppiatto*, etc.), as shown by the fact that the verb and its specification can often be replaced by another verb including the two aspects of the meaning: *piovare a dritto* can be replaced by *diluviare*; *andare di corsa* with *correre*; *andare a precipizio* with *precipitarsi*; and so on.

Also *non* is a verb circumstant, with which it forms a single verb of opposite meaning: *Giulia non ha accettato l'invito* is equivalent to *Giulia ha rifiutato l'invito*.

Also the measurement indications (of time, distance, weight, value) are verb circumstants and not its arguments: they do not indicate a separate entity from the verb (like the direct or indirect object) but the “measurement” of the value expressed by the verb (for example: *Il pacco pesa 2 chili*; *La stazione dista 3 chilometri*).

3.3.3. *The circumstants of the arguments*

The easiest type of argument circumstant represented by a noun is given by the **adjectives**, which agree in number and gender with the noun: *Il mio amico Giulio ...* , and so on. Similarly to the adjectives, the **past participles**, which agree with the noun they refer to: *Il pacco, ben confezionato, è arrivato a destinazione*.

Also the **articles** are nothing more than adjectives, for nature and function. Nature, because they originate from Latin adjectives (*un, uno, una* continue the Latin numeral adjective *unus, una, unum*; *il, lo, la ...* continue the Latin demonstrative adjective *ille, illa, illud*), and function, because their function is that of qualifying the person or thing as “not known yet” (“indefinite”) or “already known” (“definite”) within the speech. Strictly speaking, the article should be put within the circumstants. In our diagram, however, we include the articles and demonstratives (*questo*, etc.)

and possessives (*mio*, etc.) in the circle of the noun to which they refer to, given their close relationship.

After the group of adjectives and similar elements, we can include within the circumstants the **nouns** used as appositions (formed by one single noun or more elements) to another noun: *Luigi, ingegnere, ha risolto il problema; Da bravo ingegnere, Luigi ha risolto il problema, nostro cruccio da tanti anni.*

The most frequent circumstants are the **prepositional expressions** that specify various aspects of the person or thing outlined by the argument: *Gli amici del quartiere hanno regalato a Giulia un libro di storia dello sport; Paolo ha mangiato un panino con salame; I miei cugini di Milano verranno a trovarmi; Luisa abita in una casa sul mare.*

Finally, we should consider circumstants also the **relative clauses**, linked to a noun through the relative pronoun. In the example used above, we can transform the expression *di storia dello sport* in *che tratta di storia dello sport*, the expression *splendidamente illustrato* can be changed in *che è splendidamente illustrato* and the expression *vincitrice della gara* turned in *che ha vinto la gara*.

The circumstants of the arguments can have, with reference to the information they add, an essential value, that is **defining**, or simply a **descriptive** value. In the sentence *La ragazza che ti ho presentato ieri è partita* the relative clause *che ti ho presentato ieri* is essential because it defines the person named. In the sentence *Laura ha venduto la casa paterna, che ormai era rimasta disabitata*, the relative clause *che ormai era disabitata* does not serve to define the house, but only adds the information why Laura had no interest in keeping that house anymore. In writing, the defining circumstants are not separated by commas, while the descriptive circumstants use commas.

3.3.4. A special case: the polyrematic units

Expressions like *ferro da stiro, treno merci, mobile bar, fine settimana, carta di credito, sala da pranzo, scarpe da tennis, stato civile, busta paga, monte premi, alta moda, sosta vietata, pronto soccorso, pubblica sicurezza, carta d'identità, guardia del corpo*, etc., formed by multiple words, define a single object or contain a single idea, therefore work as a single word. For this reason they are called **polyrematic units**, a term that simply means “units formed by multiple words”. (In other languages than Italian, such as English or German, which have different rules to form words, these expressions do often form a single word when they are written: for example the English word *weekend*, which is *fine [della] settimana* in Italian; or the German word *Kreditkarte*, which is *carta di credito* in Italian).

Related to the polyrematic units, also less compact expressions such as *riva del mare, cima del monte, porta di casa, fondo del mare, foglio di carta*, etc. In order to define the arguments, we can consider them as a whole, even though they are often separable. (we can say: *riva ghiaiosa del mare, foglio bianchissimo di carta*).

CHAPTER FOUR

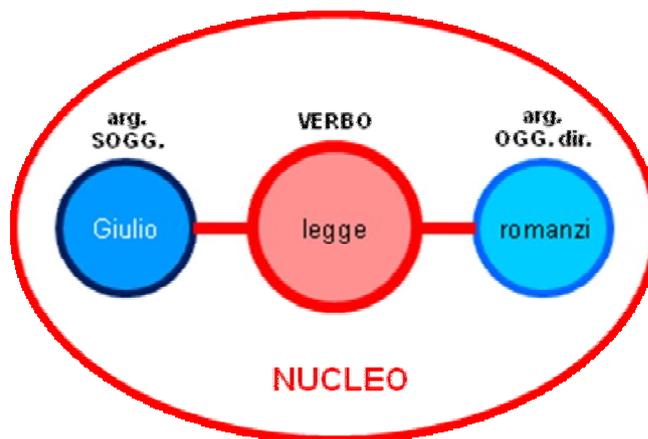
Beyond the nucleus and its circumstant: the EXPANSIONS

4.1. The EXPANSIONS

To the sentence we can still add other elements **that are put beside the whole nucleus and its possible circumstant**. We can start from the sentence reduced to the bare nucleus

Giulio legge romanzi

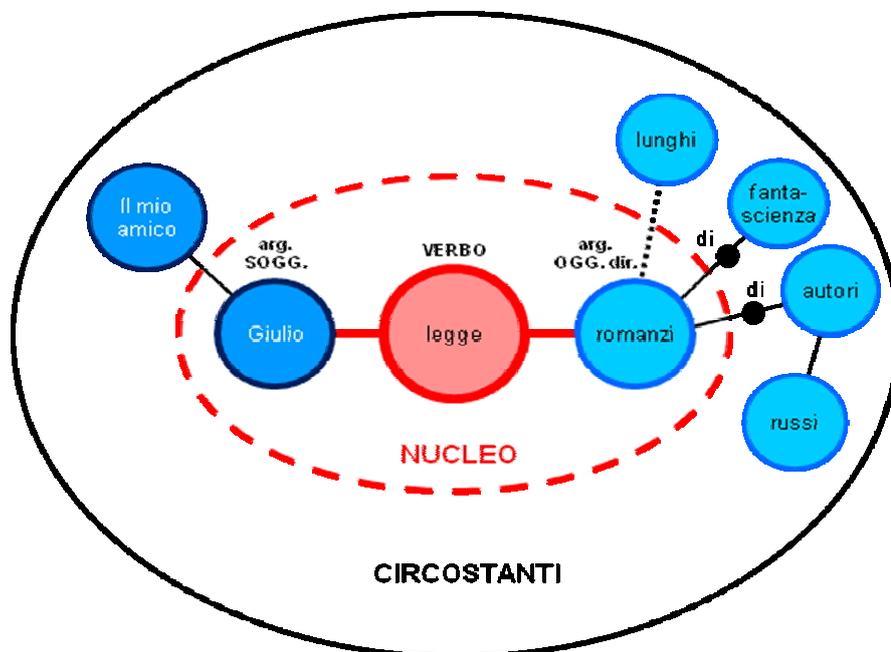
that can be represented by the following diagram



by adding some **circumstant** we obtain the sentence

Il mio amico Giulio legge lunghi romanzi di fantascienza di autori russi

that can be represented by the following extended diagram



To this sentence we can still add more information that refer, for example, to when and where as well as by which process Giulio devotes himself to these readings:

D'inverno, in montagna, in una comoda poltrona, per passatempo, il mio amico Giulio, nei giorni di bufera, davanti al camino, legge lunghi romanzi di fantascienza di autori russi.

The new elements are, conceptually, well integrated in the existing content of the sentence but have neither structural (morphological or syntactic) links nor a specific junction point with it. In fact they can be moved at various points of the linear sentence:

D'inverno, per passatempo, il mio amico Giulio, in montagna, legge, nei giorni di bufera, davanti al camino, in una comoda poltrona, lunghi romanzi di fantascienza di autori russi.

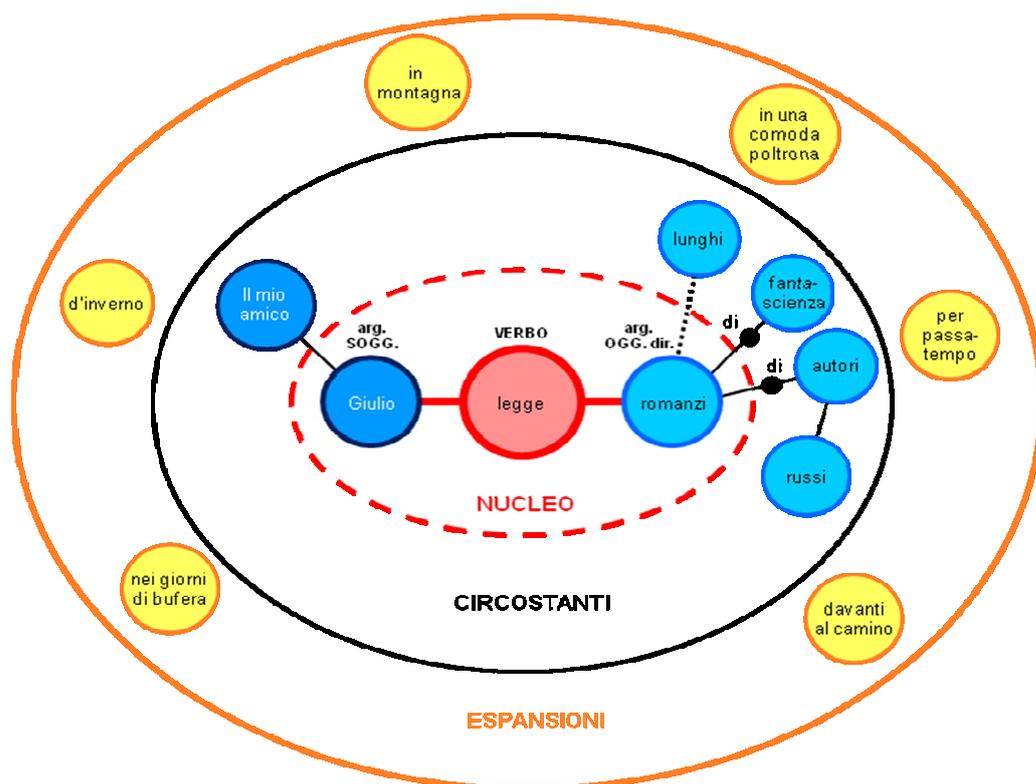
or:

Il mio amico Giulio, in montagna, d'inverno, per passatempo, nei giorni di bufera, in una comoda poltrona, davanti al camino, legge lunghi romanzi di fantascienza di autori russi.

or even

D'inverno, in montagna, nei giorni di bufera, il mio amico Giulio, davanti al camino, legge, in una comoda poltrona, per passatempo, lunghi romanzi di fantascienza di autori russi.

And so on. These new elements serve to “expand the scene” and for this reason we call them **EXPANSIONS**. We can see better their position by placing them in one of the usual patterns, in an outer segment of the second oval, contained within an oval of different colour:



The six expansions are placed in six different points but, as already mentioned, have no set position. From a semantic point of view, the expansions of the given example provide information relating to time, environmental situation and purpose (to spend time) but the meaning of these expressions, which are not linked to the verb directly, is often variable: *nei giorni di bufera* can also have a causal value (because of the storm that prevents people from going out), *in una comoda poltrona* indicates the position in a place, but also an attitude and therefore almost a mode. In addition, the expansions can also have other values, such as causal, concessive or modal.

Also some adverbs or adverbial expressions can serve to complete the scene and, thus, as **expansion**, for example *immancabilmente, per abitudine, diversamente da suo fratello Piero, con grande dispiacere di tutta la comitiva*, etc., including the so-called **phrasal adverbs** (“*framing the entire sentence*”) which express, elliptically, an opinion of the speaker on the entire event described by the sentence, such as *praticamente, sfortunatamente, fortunatamente*.

(We note here that the scholastic tradition deeply rooted in Italy of making a long series of “complements” that should exhaust all possible additional concepts, is largely misleading. Only the arguments that are linked directly to the verb bear a precise meaning (due to their relationship with the verb); the other elements that have no relationship with a verb often have more than one meaning).

4.2. Linearization and punctuation

By comparing the last commented sentence as it appears both in the diagram and its linearized form (written form) it is easy to understand the way the commas work in it: the commas divide the single expansions from the other parts of the sentence. Other commas isolate the circumstances that form the interpolated clauses, as a non restrictive relative clause added to the subject of the preceding clause, for example *pigro come un gatto o che tu già conosci*.

4.3. The concept of “simple sentence” (or “single sentence”)

We can now set the concept of **SIMPLE SENTENCE**.

By looking at the examples given and analysed before, we can find that each of them governs a single central verb, with its nucleus: this leads us to confirm that a verb, especially if predicative (see § 1-6), can be the only pillar of an entire sentence. This is the prototype sentence we want to analyse from all points of view. This prototype can be called **SIMPLE SENTENCE**, which does not imply that the sentence is formed by few words, but that contains **only one governing verb**. The adjective *simple* bears the Latin meaning *simplex* ‘made by only one component’.

Once we have fixed this term and its relating concept, we can further compare the sentence made by one central verb with the sentence made by other verbs that are placed “peripherically”, as we will see (Charter five).

CHAPTER FIVE

From expansions to dependent clauses

The COMPLEX SENTENCE

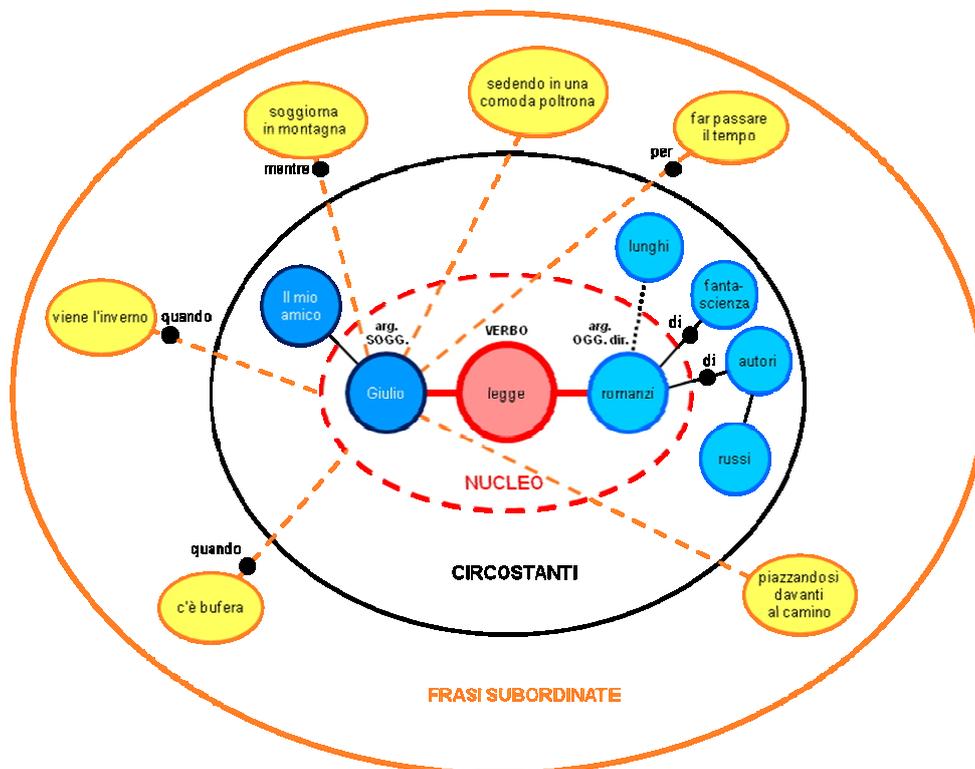
5.1 Transformations of expansions into dependent (or subordinate) clauses.

The expansions that we presented in Chapter IV, in the form of prepositional phrases, adverbs, and adverbial phrases, may be further transformed into dependent (or subordinate) clauses: these may be either explicit (with the verb in a finite form and the clause being governed by a conjunction) or else implicit (with the verb as infinitive or gerund, sometimes being preceded by a preposition). Thus the expansions present in the following example, which we have already seen in § 4.1 -

D'inverno, in montagna, nei giorni di bufera, il mio amico Giulio, davanti al camino, legge, in una comoda poltrona, per passatempo, lunghi romanzi di fantascienza di autori russi.

- can be transformed into subordinate clauses, which are collocated in the same positions, as follows:

Quando viene l'inverno, mentre soggiorna in montagna, il mio amico Giulio, piazzandosi davanti al camino, legge, sedendo in una comoda poltrona, per far passare il tempo, lunghi romanzi di autori russi.



This diagram clearly shows the basic pattern of the entire structure. There is a governing clause (also known as *main*, *principal* or *superordinate* clause) and there are **six dependent clauses** (also known as *secondary* or *subordinate* clauses). Just like the six expansions, the dependent clauses that have substituted them may be freely moved within the linear pattern of the whole sentence. Here is just one example of a different collocation of the dependent clauses in the example sentence:

Mentre soggiorna in montagna, il mio amico Giulio, quando viene l'inverno, piazzandosi davanti al camino, sedendo in una comoda poltrona, quando c'è bufera, legge, per far passare il tempo, lunghi romanzi russi.

These dependent clauses may be divided as follows:

- three temporal clauses which are explicit – i.e., the verb is in a finite form. In the diagram a broken line (----) connects these to the oval of the nucleus to show that their content provides a temporal background for the entire central scene that the nucleus expresses;
- two modal clauses and one final clause, all three implicit – i.e. with the verb in a non-finite form (gerund or infinitive). In the diagram the broken lines connect these to the subject of the governing clause in order to show that the subject of these verbs is the same as the subject of the governing clause; only in this case can the implicit dependent clause be made.

By comparing the expansions with the dependent clauses that may substitute them, we can see that while the latter may be more precise (due to the presence of the verb), they are often inelegant and can clutter the sentence.

The sentence that contains a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses is defined as a **COMPLEX SENTENCE**, not because of its size but because it consists of a combination of main and subordinate clauses. When there are multiple levels of dependence (i.e. when one subordinate clause governs one or more other subordinate clauses), then the complete sentence may also be called a **PERIODIC SENTENCE**.

5.2 Further details on dependent clauses

5.2.1 *The main clause is important in terms of structure, but not always in terms of information.*

We must not believe that in a complex sentence the governing – or main – clause necessarily contains the most important information. We have to distinguish between the structural importance (belonging to the governing clause) and the importance of information, which is decided by the context of the utterance. If I have to explain to somebody the reason why a person who is already known is late for an appointment, then the important part of the sentence in terms of information (the “new” information) will be expressed in the causal dependent clause and not in the governing clause. In the unmarked order of the parts of the sentence, the information peak is in the final part: *Franco non è venuto perché ha perso il treno.*

5.2.2 Classification of dependent clauses

Dependent clauses provide additional information to the governing clause. Such information may concern causes, objectives, temporal circumstances, modality, concessions, limitations, consequences, comparisons. Thus the dependent clauses may be defined as **causal, final, temporal, modal, concessive, limitative, exceptive, consecutive, comparative, hypothetical**.

These definitions are based on the meanings that the clauses express, beginning with the particular meaning of the conjunction which introduces them: *poiché, giacché, dato che* are typical conjunctions which indicate a cause; *quando, allorché* are typical conjunctions which indicate temporal circumstances, etc. (Many grammar books contain extensive lists.) Dependent clauses introduced by a conjunction are typically **explicit**; otherwise they may be implicit, in which case they may be introduced by a preposition followed by an infinitive (*per*, for example, may indicate either cause or purpose), or else by a gerund to indicate mode, time, cause etc.

More often than not it is the meaning that the dependent clause expresses which defines it. For all of them, however, it is necessary to study their internal composition, with special concern for the mood of the verbs, which may be indicative, subjunctive or conditional. These are semantic rather than structural issues.

5.3 Combinations of sentences

Whether a sentence is simple or complex, it is a unit which can combine with other units. When a sentence is combined with another sentence by means of a **co-ordinating conjunction** (which is one that gives equal value to the two sentences), this creates a **COMPOUND SENTENCE**. The commonest co-ordinating conjunctions are *e, ma, and o*. For example:

Sono stato a Milano e ho visto il Duomo.

Oggi sono venuto a piedi, ma domani verrò in macchina.

Partirò insieme con gli amici o forse mi tratterrò altri due giorni.

It is necessary to distinguish between the two meanings of *ma*. This conjunction may have:

- **oppositive meaning**, similar to that of *bensi* or *invece* when it contrasts two terms on the same plane, excluding the validity of the first of these, which will be preceded by *non*. E.g. *Oggi non è lunedì, ma martedì* (the purpose is to identify the day of the week, excluding Monday and affirming Tuesday);

- **limitative meaning**, similar to that of *però* or *tuttavia*, where both terms are believed to be true but they have different values which contrast each other. E.g. *Oggi è freddo, ma è una bella giornata*, which asserts that the day is unpleasant from the point of view of temperature, but pleasant from the point of view of such things as sunlight, etc. The “truth” of the first of these concepts is not denied, but is limited to a particular sphere. This limitative *ma* is very often used after a clear pause; in the spoken language it is found even at the beginning of a discourse.

The term compound sentence may also be used for sentences placed together without any conjunction, i.e., by **juxtaposition**. For example: *Io ridevo, lui piangeva; Io volevo parlargli, Marco era partito per Genova.*