In this chapter we look at the factors that determine how a sentence of a language is understood. The basic idea is that the form of a sentence, that is, how the words are ordered with respect to one another in time (or on the printed page), and the precise shape of the words, that is, how the words are pronounced, determine the kind of sentence that is being uttered. This form determines the basic function of the sentence (for example, whether it is a statement, a question, or a command). The form of the sentence, together with the context in which the sentence is uttered, defines the meaning of the sentence, the idea that the speaker is intending to convey.

Accent: A Feeling for Form

Part of a native speaker’s knowledge of language involves the proper form of words, that is, how they are to be pronounced. In Chapter 6, we discussed the fact that non-native speakers of a language typically have a foreign accent because they are unable to precisely match the form of the words that they are trying to pronounce. To a considerable extent, a foreign accent arises from the fact that the sounds of a speaker’s native language are produced differently from the sounds of his non-native language.

In the same way, non-native speakers may typically show a “foreign accent” in the way that they construct the form of sentences. They may put things in the wrong order, leave things out, or put things in that don’t belong.

Now let’s look at some examples that will help us distinguish form, function, and meaning. Here are some typical things that non-native speakers of Standard English say:
What we want to focus on at this point is that these sentences don’t sound like “correct” English, regardless of how the words are pronounced. Native speakers of English understand the sentences but recognize that they deviate in certain ways from what is understood to be “correct.” To take just one example for now, (1a), *Sun is hot*, is less than perfect English because in English we have to say *The sun is hot*. Other languages, however, may not have a word for *the*. Speakers of such a language might leave out *the*, either because they don’t know how English works or because they are unable to always remember to put in *the* where it belongs.

As we work through our survey of what speakers of English know about their language and what speakers of other languages know about theirs, we use errors of this type to highlight precisely what it means to speak “without an accent.” In an important way, recognizing what causes an accent helps us to recognize what it means to speak without one.

We turn next to an example of how the form of a sentence is related to aspects of its meaning and how it is used to communicate in discourse. The point to keep in mind is that in order for us to understand how languages work, we must recognize the differences in how the form, the meaning, and the function are different from one another in different languages.

**An Example: Communicating an Idea**

Suppose that you are in a restaurant, and you want a cup of coffee and you want the
waiter to give you one. You could say:

(2) Give me a cup of coffee.

(3) Can you give me a cup of coffee?

Of course, you could say many other things that you could reasonably expect would have the effect of the waiter giving you a cup of coffee, a topic which we will get to shortly.

What do these two sentences have in common? They are about the event of the waiter giving you a cup of coffee. Examples (2) and (3) in part express the same literal meaning, or what we refer to as content, which is this idea of the waiter giving you a cup of coffee.

Moreover, they both communicate the same, more complex idea: your desire for a cup of coffee and your intention that the waiter will give you a cup of coffee because of this desire. We call this more complex idea the force of the sentence.

Notice that neither sentence literally says that you want a cup of coffee. You could say this, though:

(4) I want a cup of coffee.

And this sentence, like (2) and (3), has the same force. But it has a different content, since it doesn't actually express the event of the waiter giving you a cup of coffee.

Thus, each of these three sentences has a different form, and each literally expresses a different (but related) meaning.

- Sentence (2) is in the imperative form, marked by the fact that it lacks an explicit subject. What this sentence does is express a command (or make a request, particularly with the addition of the politeness marker please). It literally and directly expresses your request that the waiter give you a cup of coffee.
- Sentence (3) is in the interrogative form, marked by the fact that can precedes you. This sentence asks a question. It is literally a question about whether the waiter has the ability to give you a cup of coffee. It expresses neither your desire nor your intention. But you can ask for a cup of coffee this way because you can reasonably expect the waiter to draw the intended conclusion, again by recognizing that this is the sort of thing that people say in restaurants when they are ordering a cup of coffee.
- Sentence (4) is in the declarative form. It makes a statement. It expresses your desire for a cup of coffee, but it does not express your intention that the waiter should do anything. The literal meaning is that you want a cup of coffee. The waiter must draw the conclusion that he should give you a cup of coffee because you expressed your desire for a cup of coffee, and because of the context (after all, you are in a restaurant).
The differences between these sentences highlight the difference between (i) the form of the sentence, what we call its structure or its grammar or grammatical form; (ii) the literal meaning that depends on this form; (iii) the function of the sentence, that is, whether it makes a request, asks a question, or makes a statement; and (iv) the force of the sentence, that is, the more complex idea that it communicates.

Example (4) also shows that it is possible for a sentence to express literal content and at the same time to communicate a more complex idea indirectly, because of the ability of speakers to draw conclusions about what other speakers have in mind when they say certain things. The direct idea is that the speaker wants a cup of coffee; the indirect idea is that the waiter should give it to him.

In fact, you could express your desire for a cup of coffee by simply saying:

(5) A cup of coffee, please.

This is not even a sentence, yet it has the same force as the other ways of asking for a cup of coffee—again, because of the context.

Just as the same idea can be expressed in a number of different ways, so can the same form express a number of different ideas. Take a look again at sentence (3), Can you give me a cup of coffee? This sentence has the form of a question, but it is used to express a request. The following sentences are all questions but can convey different types of ideas.

(6) Is it time to leave yet?

(7) What kind of dog is that?

(8) Do I look like a maid to you?

(9) What kind of idiot do you take me for?

Sentence (6) appears to ask a very straightforward question—it is asking whether it is time to leave yet, and the expected answer is either yes or no. Sentence (7) is a different kind of question as far as its form is concerned, but it also seems to be very straightforward—it is asking the hearer to identify the type of dog that is being observed.

Sentence (8) has the same form as sentence (6), but it does not seem to invite a yes-or-no answer—a normal interpretation is that the speaker is objecting that he or she is definitely not a maid (and should not be treated like one, perhaps). Similarly, sentence (9) suggests that some idea that has been expressed in the conversation is stupid. Both of these last two sentences have the indirect force of a statement, not a question, even though they have the form of a question.

Finally, consider sentences (10)–(12):

(10) The waiter gave me a cup of coffee.
(11) I got a cup of coffee from the waiter.

(12) This is the cup of coffee that the waiter gave me.

These sentences express a relation between the speaker, the waiter, and a cup of coffee. It is the same relation expressed literally by sentences (2) and (3), namely, the relation “the waiter gives me a cup of coffee.” Notice that this relation is a constant whether the sentence makes a request, makes a statement, or asks a question. This relation forms part of the content of the sentence. The total content of a sentence consists of the relation or relations that the sentence expresses between the people and things referred to in the sentence, as well as less concrete things like times, places, reasons, and events.

**Form, Content, Function, and Force**

Summarizing, these examples show that we need to distinguish four aspects of sentences. First, there is the form of the sentence. The major forms of English sentences are illustrated by sentences (2)–(9). Second, there is the content of the sentence, which expresses the relationships between the people and things referred to. Third, there is the function of the sentence, for example, to make a request, to make a statement, or to ask a question about that content. Fourth, there is the intended force of the sentence, the meaning that the speaker intends the hearer to understand.

Let’s look again at sentence (3)—*Can you give me a cup of coffee?*—to distinguish these four aspects. The sentence has the form of a question: the verb *can* precedes the word *you*. In contrast, in a statement, the order would be the other way around: *You can give me a cup of coffee.* The content, as we have seen, is the relation “give” between the hearer (in this case the waiter), the speaker, and a cup of coffee. The function of the question is to ask whether the hearer is able to give the speaker a cup of coffee. And the intended force is that the waiter should give the speaker a cup of coffee.

Let’s look at another example, sentence (6), *Is it time to leave yet?* Again, the sentence has the form of a question: *is* precedes *it*. The content concerns the time of an event, that of leaving. The function is to ask whether it is time to leave yet. And the intended force is that the hearer should answer the question yes or no.

**Exercise 1: Form, Function, and Force**

To be sure that you understand the distinctions being made here, write down what the form, function, and force are of sentences (7) and (9). The answers are on page 95. (The content is the same in all cases.)
When we talk about “the work that language does,” we are referring both to the capacity of language to express functions and forces like those that we have just examined, and to precisely how the form of a language is used to do this. There are two basic facts about language that we focus on in the next few chapters—we highlight them in the box at the top of this page.

What we have summarized here is the fact that the speaker of a language has to know how to arrange words to form a sentence in that language, and the hearer has to know how to interpret this arrangement of words. Every speaker of every language knows precisely how to do this for his language. Every language has a complex set of rules for how to do this; there are no “primitive languages” that lack rules.

As we discuss later in this book, there are often very closely related languages or “dialects” that share many rules but differ slightly in a few rules. In such cases, speakers of each dialect may feel that the speakers of the other language do not obey the rules of the language. But this is not true—they are all obeying rules; it’s just that there are different rules for different dialects. Because there are different dialects, the “languages” that they are speaking are different in very subtle but noticeable ways. Speakers of a language are extremely sensitive to language differences and can always tell when someone does not speak exactly like they do. Speakers of different dialects and languages follow the rules of their own dialects and languages. It is important to understand this phenomenon because there are often social and cultural factors associated with different languages.

When languages are more distantly related, applying the rules of one language to another often produces very noticeable errors. For example, many languages do not have different forms of verbs to express temporal relations, while English does have such forms. Speakers of such languages may simply fail to produce the correct English forms, giving rise to errors such as He have a good time yesterday and The singer have big band. Or they may misuse certain forms: I am wanting to leave now and She enjoys to play tennis. Understanding the differences in rules between languages allows the learner to anticipate and deal with likely errors.¹

¹ A good sample of these “transfer errors” can be found in Ann Raimes, Keys for Writers, 2000.
Grammar: The Role of Form in Language

We have said that the form signals the content, function, and force of a sentence. Exactly what do we mean by form? Consider again the English sentence (2), \textit{Give me a cup of coffee}. We called this an \textbf{imperative} sentence, referring to its particular form. This sentence lacks an explicit phrase that refers to the hearer, and thus it has a special form that distinguishes it from other English sentences. Its function as an imperative is thus defined by this aspect of its form. In another language, the same function might be signaled in other ways. For example, in Italian, the imperative sentence may have a special form of the verb. The imperative form of the verb meaning 'give' in Italian is \textit{da}, while the declarative form is \textit{dà}, as illustrated in (13) and (14). (Notice also that the word for 'me' goes in a different position in the imperative and in the declarative—it follows the verb in the imperative and precedes it in the declarative.)

(13) \textit{Dammi una tazza di caffè.}
\hspace{1cm} give-me a cup of coffee
\hspace{1cm} 'Give me a cup of coffee.'

(14) mi \textit{dà} una tazza di caffè
me (s)he-gives a cup of coffee
'She gives me a cup of coffee.'

We look more closely at the types of functions that sentences have and the use of form to mark these functions in the next chapter.

The form of a sentence also plays a role in determining its literal content. In English, where a phrase goes in a sentence determines whether it is the actor in an event or the object that is undergoing the action. An example is provided in (15).

(15) The dog bit Sandy.
Sandy bit the dog.

\textbf{Answer to Exercise 1: Form, Function, and Force}

Sentence (7) has the form of a question, in particular, what is called a “\textit{wh-question}” (because these questions begin with words beginning with ‘wh-’, like \textit{what}). It has the function of asking what kind of dog that is. The force is that the hearer should provide the answer to the question. Sentence (9) is also a \textit{wh-question}. It has the function of asking the hearer what kind of idiot the hearer takes the speaker for. But it has the force of saying that the speaker thinks that the hearer is an idiot.
The same individuals are involved in this event of biting, but the relation is different in the two cases. We look more closely at how form determines literal content in the remaining chapters in this section.

The relationship between form, content, and function, particularly the form part, is familiar to many readers as “grammar.” And for many of those readers, “grammar” is something that they were made to learn about in high school, might have disliked intensely, and may well have largely forgotten.

The reason grammar is hard for many people is that it does not appear to have any immediately useful purpose. After all, by the time we learn grammar, we are already fluent speakers of our own language—what does knowledge of grammar give us that we don’t already have?

There are two reasons that some knowledge of grammar is useful. The first is that there are important differences between spoken language and written language, and these differences can be most effectively described in terms of grammatical concepts and categories. Knowing about grammar helps us write better, because we are more aware and in control of what is required in the two styles of language, spoken and written. Moreover, in thinking about the written language, we can talk explicitly about the differences in form between two or more ways of expressing the same content and can evaluate which works better to convey our ideas, and why.

The second reason, which is most central to the focus of this book, is that the grammar of a language is a summation of the knowledge that a speaker has about how that language works. We have already seen that an understanding of how form works is essential to understanding how languages express content and function, that is, how they allow us to communicate. We already know intuitively how our own language works; the challenge is to acquire knowledge about how another language works. And we want that knowledge to be usable.

To put it another way, the grammar of a language is the set of “rules” (or “instructions,” if you like) that specify how units are arranged to form phrases and sentences and how the parts of a sentence correspond to its meaning. For anyone who wants to learn how to communicate thoughts in another language, some insight into the grammar of that language can be very useful, and in some cases it may even be essential.

For these reasons, we introduce in this section of the book the most important grammatical terms and concepts. Wherever possible, we illustrate them first using English, and then we look at examples from other languages to provide a broader perspective. Because the rules involve both form and meaning, we compare languages in two basic respects.

First, we look at how languages differ in their form. In learning a second language, it is very important to be aware of the grammatical differences. Knowing how a language arranges its units allows us to focus on the areas where we have to devote special attention to expressing things in the right way.

Second, we look at the various aspects of meaning that languages can express. Different languages use different grammatical devices to express the same components of meaning. Some languages explicitly express certain of these components that are implicit
in another language; as speakers, we have to know what has to be said explicitly and what needs to be implied. Such differences pose particular difficulties for the language learner and warrant special attention and practice.

What Is Structure?

A little while back we introduced the term structure of a sentence or a phrase and said it was another way of referring to the form. The word “structure” refers specifically to the way in which a sentence or phrase is organized into parts, how the parts are grouped together, and how they are ordered with respect to one another. Consider yet again sentence (2):

(2) Give me a cup of coffee.

There are several things that our intuitions as speakers of English tell us about the structure of this sentence. First, we recognize that the words are of different categories or types: give is a verb, me is a pronoun, and so on. Second, we recognize that the order of words is special; scrambling them up would not produce a sentence of English.

Third, we recognize that a cup of coffee is a phrase that is used to refer to a particular thing. Me a is not a phrase, nor is Give me a.

We explore aspects of structure in the remaining chapters of Section II. We introduce some minimal terminology that will allow us to refer clearly to the parts of sentences and phrases. To illustrate the structure of sentences, we use the simple device of bracketing words together to show how the parts of a sentence are arranged and what they consist of. For example, the structure of Give me a cup of coffee can be shown as follows:

(16) [Give me [a cup of coffee]]

Putting brackets around a cup of coffee represents the fact that it is a phrase. And grouping give and me with [a cup of coffee] represents the fact that give me a cup of coffee is also a phrase (a verb phrase, to be precise).

The arrangement of the words into phrases and the sequencing of these phrases are what constitute the structure of a sentence. Those familiar with “sentence diagramming”

Exercise 2: Scrambling

How many ways can you scramble the words of Give me a cup of coffee? Are any of them possible sentences of English?
know how to sketch out the structure of a simple sentence and how to assign a function to each part of the structure. This type of exercise may not be especially challenging for simple examples like *Give me a cup of coffee*. However, it becomes quite challenging when sentences get complicated, even in one's own language. Having the ability to see clearly the structure of one's own language, and understanding the ways in which its structure corresponds to that of another language, can substantially facilitate the task of learning the other language.

**Categories**

Let's consider in more detail how languages have rules about structure that are known to the speakers of those languages and how these rules can vary from language to language. Think of the words *the, dog, and barked*. How many different ways can we arrange these three words? The following list shows that there are in fact six ways to arrange three words:

(17) a. the dog barked  
     b. the barked dog  
     c. barked the dog  
      
     d. dog the barked  
     e. dog barked the  
     f. barked dog the

Are all of these sentences of English? No, only (17a) is. Someone who knows English has to know what *the, dog, and barked* mean and has to recognize that these words can be combined to express the thought 'the dog barked.' But the person also needs to know that the words have to go in a particular order.

When we have more than one participant in an action, each of whom plays a particular role in the action, the English sentence uses the order of words to indicate who is doing what to whom. Consider these two sentences:

(18) The dog chased the cat.  
     The cat chased the dog.

The words used in the two sentences are exactly the same, but the meanings are vastly different.

This example illustrates a very important point about the meaning of a sentence that we will get into in more detail later in this chapter: The structure of a sentence specifies the roles played by the participants in a relationship expressed by a sentence; the rules of the language say how the parts of the structure match up with these roles.

If you are aware of such facts about English, will that help you when you try to learn another language? Not directly, it turns out, because some other languages work differently from English. Of course, it does help to know that another language could use a different order of words, but we have to know precisely what that order is. In other words, we know what questions we should ask about how another language forms questions, but we do not necessarily know what the answers are going to be.
How would we say *John read that letter* and *Did John read that letter?* in Japanese, for example? We could say these sentences in this way:

(19) John ga sono tegami o yon-da.
     John     that letter     read-past
     ‘John read that letter.

John ga sono tegami o yon-da-ka.
John     that letter     read-past-question
‘Did John read that letter?’

Notice that the verb comes at the end in these Japanese examples. In fact, it must come at the end of the sentence that it belongs to; this is a rule of Japanese. And in the second sentence, the particle *ka* is added to the verb at the end of the question sentence to indicate that it is a question. Japanese also has the particles *ga* and *o* that have the function of indicating which phrase is the subject and which is the object.

What about Bulgarian? Here we have other possibilities:

(20) Kuche-to lae-she
     dog-the    barked
     ‘The dog barked.’

Lae-she kuche-to.
     barked     dog-the
     ‘The dog barked.’

Both orders of subject and verb are possible, appropriate to different contexts. Notice also that the Bulgarian word for *the* follows the word for *dog*, in contrast to what happens in English.

What about Spanish? In Spanish we could say the following:

(21) El    perro raspó.
     the dog    barked
     ‘The dog barked.’

Or we could say this:

(22) Raspó el perro.
     barked the dog
     ‘The dog barked.’

What we would say depends on the context. *El perro raspó* answers the question ‘What did the dog do?’, while *Raspó el perro* answers the questions ‘What happened?’ or ‘Who barked?’
Spanish is like English in that it has a word for the that appears before the word for dog, but there seem to be other differences in terms of what order the words appear in.

We can see that observations about the order of words in English are not special things about the particular words the, dog, and barked, and the same is true for other languages. If we think about similar English examples with a, this, that, and cat, pig, rooster, and hissed, grunted, crowed, and so on, we find that the pattern holds true for the entire language. So in English, only the pattern exemplified by the dog barked is used.

Let’s look at Table 7.1. Using the “Chinese Menu Approach,” suppose that we take one word from column A, one from column B, and one from column C. Doing so will give us reasonable sentences, if we go straight across a row as in (23).

TABLE 7.1
Menu for simple English sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the</td>
<td>dog</td>
<td>barked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>hissed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this</td>
<td>pig</td>
<td>grunted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>rooster</td>
<td>crowed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(23) The dog barked.
A cat hissed.
This pig grunted.
That rooster crowed.

But we can also skip around, still going from left to right, column by column, but moving up and down between the rows and combining the words in funny ways, e.g. This cat crowed or That rooster hissed. These may not be natural sounds for a cat or a rooster to make, but these are definitely sentences of English and we understand what they mean.

This last point is important enough to restate: A string of words that has all the words in the right place and is completely interpretable but has a strange meaning is a grammatical sentence. But if a string of words has the words in the wrong order, it is ungrammatical, even if we can figure out some kind of intended or approximate meaning. So This dog hissed may be strange, but it is grammatical, while Pig the grunted is not a grammatical sentence, even if you and every other native speaker can reliably decipher the meaning.

Notice that we must take just one word from column A, one from column B, and one from column C. And we must order the words according to this order of the columns. If
we do not, then in general we get a string of words that is not a sentence of English—e.g. *The barked, *Cat hissed, *Grunted crowed, *Dog a cat, *This that pig, and so on. (We use the symbol * to indicate that a string of words is not a possible expression of the language under discussion, in this case, English.) And we cannot take more than one word from each column in some haphazard way; doing so also produces ungrammaticality: *the a dog barked, *the dog cat rooster crowed barked; *the dog barked a.

Not surprisingly, it is possible to construct a Chinese menu for simple sentences of any language. Consider the following sentences of Mandarin Chinese:

```
这   是   书.
Zhèi   shì        shū.
This is a book.

我   是   学生.
Wǒ      shì      xuéshèng.
I am a student.

先生   是   中国    人.
Xiānshēng    shì    Zhōngguó     rén.
The teacher is Chinese (LIT: China person).
```

Table 7.2 will produce these sentences if we take one word from each column in left-to-right order. Notice that there is only one item in column B, so we have to take that one for any sequence of words from this menu.

---

**TABLE 7.2**

Menu for simple Chinese sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>这</td>
<td>是</td>
<td>书.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhèi</td>
<td>shì</td>
<td>shū.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我</td>
<td>是</td>
<td>学生.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ</td>
<td>shì</td>
<td>xuéshèng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td>student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>先生</td>
<td>是</td>
<td>中国</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiānshēng</td>
<td>shì</td>
<td>Zhōngguó rén.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Because of the sorts of patterns that we have just seen, we say that the words in a language are members of categories. A category consists of all those words that can go in the same column. The words in the columns in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 are just a small sampling of the total set of words in each of the categories. And sometimes a word can be a member of more than one category, for example, the word can in English, which is both a noun and an auxiliary verb.

For convenience, we give the categories names like noun, verb, and so on. The nouns of a language form one category, and the verbs another. In the next three chapters, we look more closely at what determines the membership of the most important categories.

Sentences of a language are formed by arranging words of particular categories in specific orders. Statements about the particular categories and the particular orders in which they can be arranged are often called grammatical rules. Words in the same category participate in the formation of phrases in the same way. The rules of grammar that native speakers know are not about individual words but about categories of words.

A grammatical rule of a language says how to form a sentence, by taking a word from one category, followed by a word from another category, and so on. For example, Table 7.2 illustrates a rule of Chinese that we can state as follows: "Make a sentence by taking a noun (that is, a word from column A), followed by 'is,' followed by another noun (that is, a word from column C).

Summary

So, what do we have to know in order to speak and understand a language using sentences from the language?

- We have to know the words and what they mean and how they are pronounced.
- We have to know what category (or categories) each word is a member of.
- We have to know the grammatical rules.

And we also have to know how the meaning of a sentence is determined by the meanings of the words, their precise shapes, and the structure of the sentence. In the next few chapters, we look more closely at the ways in which languages use form to express meaning.
Additional Exercises

1. Look again at the sentences in (1). If you are a competent speaker of English, you should be able to correct each error fairly easily. But it is more challenging to say what the error is and why the correction works. In the text we suggested what you might say about sentence (1a). Do the same for the remaining sentences in (1).

2. We noted that it is possible to ask for a cup of coffee in a restaurant by saying “A cup of coffee, please.” Think about what the conditions are for such a request to be successful. Does it matter who this phrase is addressed to? Why? What would happen if the same thing was said in a different environment, say, the post office or the ticket counter at an arena? Why? How do things work at the post office and the ticket office? What sorts of phrases would produce the desired result in a restaurant, and what sorts would not (e.g. “a chair, please”; “a dog, please”; “ten dollars, please”)? Why? Does it matter if you don’t say “please”?

3. An English noun phrase typically contains a noun, like dog, and may contain a number of descriptive words that specify a property of the thing that the noun refers to. Some of these words are called adjectives: e.g. furry, happy, smart, pink. Construct a menu that shows how these adjectives can combine with the nouns dog, cat, pig, and rooster and the words the, this, a. Are all combinations predicted by the menu grammatical noun phrases in English? Are there any combinations that are fully grammatical but strange because of their meaning? What does this tell you about the relationship between grammatical form and meaning?

4. Construct four English verb phrases with structures that are different from the one in (16) and different from each other. Each of these should be a verb phrase that lacks something that the one in (16) has, or has something that (16) lacks, or both. To do this, start by observing that give me [a cup of coffee] contains a verb and two noun phrases.

5. Construct two verb phrases in a language other than English that you know is different from the structure of the sentence in (16). Describe the difference between these verb phrases and the one in (16) in terms of the phrases that they contain and the order in which they appear.

6. For a language that you know, other than English, state as clearly as you can how that language forms (a) imperatives and (b) interrogatives. Compare with how English forms imperatives and interrogatives, focusing on where English is the same and where it is different.

References
