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TERM PAPER

The parts of speech problem in Modern English

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## INTRODUCTION

The research of the English language involves the examination of its various components, including the parts of speech. The classification of words into parts of speech has been a long-standing issue in linguistics, and it continues to generate interest among researchers and linguists. This term paper aims to explore the problem of parts of speech in modern English. The paper will investigate the various criteria used for classifying words into different parts of speech and discuss the challenges that arise in determining the appropriate category for certain words. Additionally, the paper will examine how the classification of words into parts of speech affects their syntactic and semantic functions in a sentence. The study of the parts of speech is essential for understanding how words work together in a sentence and for developing effective communication skills in English.

The fact is that today there is no classification that could satisfy linguists, the criteria for dividing words by parts of speech have not yet been established, so the number of parts of speech is not a constant unit. Parts of speech are the main lexical-grammatical classes by which the words of the language are divided. The very term "parts of speech" owes its origin to the ancient Greek grammatical tradition, in which the propositions were separated from the language, so it has long since lost its motivational connection with the phenomenon being denoted.

The **aim** of the research is to consider the problems of parts of speech in English.

The **subject** is problems of classification parts of speech in English and their peculiarities.

The **object** of my Term Paper is parts of speech, its classification and functions.

The research objectives are the following:

- Study of parts of languages in English
- A review of the theory about the traditional system of parts of speech.
- Consideration of alternative approaches to the classification of parts of speech.

- Consideration of problematic aspects in the classification of parts of speech.

The theoretical significance of my work can be explained by the fact my research collects and analyzes information about parts of speech in English language, which makes a certain contribution to solving topical issues in the theory of Modern English. The research methods are grammatical analysis, commentaries of examples and generalizing summing up methodology.

## CHAPTER 1. THE TRADITIONAL PARTS OF SPEECH SYSTEM

Parts of speech refer to the different categories of words that are used in a language. Each part of speech has its own unique characteristics and functions within a sentence. They are categorized into two types: notional and functional.

Notional parts of speech have an independent lexical meaning and can function independently in a sentence. English has six notional parts of speech:

- **Nouns** - are used to refer to people (*girl, teacher*), objects (*book, chair*), creatures (*bird, fish*), places (*beach, park*), qualities (*tenderness, intelligence*), phenomena (*tornado, thunderstorm*), and abstract ideas (*happiness, freedom*) as if they were all "things" [1, p. 82]
- **Adjectives** - are words used to provide more information about the nouns they modify (a *beautiful* sunset, a *bright* light, *ancient* books).
- **Verbs** - are words used to refer to actions (She *went* to the store *to buy* some products) or states (This salad *tastes* good) involving people, animals, or things.
- **Adverbs** - are words used to modify verbs (eat *quickly*), adjectives (*incredibly* beautiful sunset), and other adverbs (*quite* carefully) to provide more information about actions, states, events, and things.
- **Pronouns** - are words that are used in place of noun phrases, typically referring to people and things already known in the context of the conversation or text (*I* found my keys in *my* pocket). [1, p.83]
- **Numerals** - are words used to represent numbers or quantities (The train leaves at 5 pm).

Some scholars consider pronouns and numerals as functional parts of speech.

Functional parts of speech do not have an independent meaning and are used to indicate various syntactic relationships or modify notional parts of speech. They cannot function independently in a sentence. English has six functional parts of speech:

- **Articles** - are words used before nouns to indicate whether the noun is specific or general (She always wears *the* same blue dress).
- **Particles** – are small words that are added to other words to modify or clarify their meaning or to indicate a specific grammatical aspect of the sentence (I *only* wanted to ask you the time). Moreover, they connect two pieces of information within the same text (Dima plays the piano *as well* as his father).
- **Prepositions** - are words used with nouns or pronouns in phrases to provide information about time, place, or other connections between actions and things (I will meet you *at* the airport).
- **Conjunctions** – expresses some connection between phenomena in extralinguistic reality (Would you like tea *or* coffee?).
- **Interjections** - are words or phrases used to express strong emotions or feelings ("*Wow!*").
- **Modal words** - are words that are used to modify the meaning of a sentence by indicating the speaker's attitude towards the statement being made (*Of course*, I agree with your opinion).

In addition to this classification, there are many other views proposed by different linguists. It will be considered in the following chapters.

### **1.1 Historical development of the parts of speech problem.**

The classification of parts of speech has undergone significant changes over time, reflecting shifts in linguistic theory and changes in the English language itself. The grammatical tradition of OE was largely based on Latin grammar, which recognized eight parts of speech: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, numeral, pronoun, preposition, conjunction, and interjection and even participles and infinitives. However, the OE grammatical tradition hadn't recognized two additional parts of speech: the article and some classes of pronouns. Moreover, a gerund hadn't developed yet. Unlike Modern English, which is mostly analytical language, OE

was a synthetic language. It means that some parts of speech like nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs were declined.

In Modern English (ME), which emerged in the 15th century, the parts of speech were largely the same as in OE, but the grammar was simplified and standardized. This led to a more rigid categorization of words according to their syntactic and semantic functions. Nouns were categorized as either countable or uncountable, verbs were categorized according to their tense and aspect, and adjectives and adverbs were distinguished by their function in modifying nouns and verbs, respectively. Pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections were also recognized as distinct parts of speech.

In modern linguistics, diametrically opposed views on the number and quality of criteria for distinguishing parts of speech coexist. Firstly, this is the so-called homogeneous classification, that is, the distribution of language units according to one criterion, and, secondly, it is a heterogeneous classification, which means the distribution of language units according to several criteria. However, even within this classification there is no consistency, because scientists used different signs to single out a single criterion.

Parts of speech are often seen as the basis for parsing language. As Crystal argues, linguists often believe that they can satisfactorily describe classes of English words before proceeding to the part of grammar, treating parts of speech simply as part of the theoretical preamble to grammar [2]. This view is also reflected in the structure of grammar textbooks, which traditionally follow a very similar pattern: parts of speech are placed at the beginning of a grammar book and then the more complex issues are described. This is because parts of speech cannot be understood in isolation from the more complex parts of grammar [3].

Nevertheless, this view is relatively widespread, since it fits well with the idea of language as a structure consisting of several levels, each of which has a certain basic unit, which is seen as the basic building block of higher units in an abstract hierarchy. As a result, words and their categories are considered as a natural starting point for studying the field of phrases, clauses of sentences.



In a certain sense, the relationship between parts of speech and other grammatical elements is complex, because they assume reciprocity, where a part of speech is defined in terms of other grammatical elements, and other grammatical elements are defined in terms of parts of speech. Thus, although Crystal's criticism is not without grounds, it is difficult to imagine any part of speech, which can be determined at the beginning of book without using other parts of the language.

However, in the 20th century, linguistic theory began to challenge the traditional categorization of parts of speech. Structural linguistics, which was dominant in the early 20th century, focused on the formal properties of language and argued that the parts of speech were arbitrary and not based on any inherent properties of words themselves. Generative linguistics, which emerged in the 1950s, emphasized the underlying structure of language and proposed that the parts of speech were determined by their function in a sentence rather than by their formal properties. As a result of these changes in linguistic theory, the classification of parts of speech became more fluid and less rigid. For example, some linguists began to recognize the category of "particles," which are words that do not fit neatly into any of the traditional parts of speech but have important syntactic and semantic functions. Additionally, some linguists have argued that the traditional categories of "noun" and "verb" are not universal and may not apply to all languages.

Another important question related to parts of language is whether parts are universal categories that can be applied to any language or are linguistic categories that can be applied only to certain languages. In practice, this is not necessarily a binary choice; it is possible to combine two seemingly opposite points of view to reach a compromise solution [4].

Researchers of the English language in their majority preferred a heterogeneous classification.

Scientists single out four criteria for the division of words into parts of speech: semantic, morphological, syntactic, some call the fourth criterion word forming, and some insist on the criteria of combinability [5].

## **1.2. Classification of words according to the traditional parts of speech system**

In traditional grammar, words are categorized into parts of speech based on three main criteria: meaning, form, and function.

**Meaning** refers to the general meaning shared by all the words belonging to a particular part of speech, rather than their specific lexical meanings.

**Form** refers to the morphological properties of words, including any formal language features that indicate grammatical categories.

**Function** can be understood in terms of a word's syntactic valency or its syntactic position within a sentence.

Using these criteria, English words can be divided into 12 different classes: nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, pronouns, numerals, articles, particles, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and modal words.

### **1.2.1. Notional parts of speech (Noun, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, Numerals, Adverbs) and its peculiarities and problems**

**Nouns** are used to refer to things, places, concepts, people and objects as it is the main nominative unit of speech. It is a notional part of speech, so it is characterized by three criteria: semantic, formal, functional.

The nouns are classified into a separate word group due to a number of reasons and characteristics. Firstly, they all share the same lexical and grammatical meaning of thingness and substantiality (**semantic feature**). According to this criterion a noun has two categories such as **common** nouns (planet, book) and **proper** nouns (*Facebook, Germany*). Two more subcategories are distinguished among common nouns: **countable** (*a book, a tree*) and **uncountable** nouns (*sand, air*). Uncountable nouns are always used in singular, countable nouns have singular and plural form and make up the nucleus of the morphological field of the noun, while uncountable nouns make up the periphery. And according to the form of existence we distinguish **inanimate** (*water, grass*) and **animate** (*bird, insect*)

nouns which may be divided into **human** (*child, athlete*) and **non-human** (*lion, deer*). Secondly, according to their form we have 2 grammatical categories:

- The category of **number** which is a representation of objective category of quantity. It is realized through the opposition: singular::plural (*flower::flowers*), but its realization is restricted by the implicit grammatical meaning of unaccountableness. Moreover, among this category we distinguish **Singularia** (nouns that do not have plural forms – *knowledge, advice, information*) tantum and **Pluralia** tantum (nouns that do not have singular form – *scissors, glasses*)
- The category of **case** (the **common** case and the possessive or **genitive** case) which correlates with the objective category of possession. It is quite a problematic question in English grammar as there are many different theories connecting with the category of case. For example, C. U. Vorontsova considers that -'s is not a case inflection and that there are no cases in English because it can be expressed with the help of preposition “of” (John’s book - the book of John). Furthermore, the substitutional theory states that there are 3 cases: The Nominative, The Objective case (due to the existence of objective pronouns *me, him, whom* – *I saw him at the store.*), The Genitive. Ch. Fillmore introduced a syntactic-semantic classification of cases, which relate to the deep structure of a sentence. According to Fillmore, verbs can have different relationships with nouns, and there are six cases that reflect these relationships:
  - Agentive Case (A): *Sarah baked a cake for the party.*
  - Instrumental Case (I): *I cut the paper with scissors.*
  - Dative Case (D): *I gave my friend a present for her birthday.*
  - Factitive Case (F): *The storm destroyed the bridge.*
  - Locative Case (L): *Kyiv is rainy.*
  - Objective Case (O): *He ate the pizza with extra cheese.*

Thirdly, noun has **morphological features** which include simple nouns (*tree, chair*), derived nouns (formed by adding affixes to the stem - *reader,*

*madness*), compound nouns (formed by combining two stems – *sunflower*, *bookshelf*), and composite nouns (formed by combining a stem and a particle). Finally, its **syntactic features** show that the noun can function in all syntactic roles in a sentence except for the predicate. It is highly combinable with other parts of speech in both left-hand and right-hand connections. Almost all parts of speech except for verbs can be used as noun modifiers. However, the most common determiners of a noun are articles, pronouns, numerals, adjectives, and nouns themselves in the common and genitive case.

The **verb** performs the function of expressing the action, state or existence of an object. **Semantic features:** grammatical meaning of variability. It provides an ability to denote actions or states.

**Morphological features:** grammatical categories of **tense** (denotes the reflection of objective division of time - temporality), **aspect** (denotes duration of the action), **voice** (is realised through the opposition - passive voice:: active voice, but is restricted because of the implicit grammatical meaning of intransitivity.), **mood** (the indicative and the imperative), phase (denote temporal relativity - present, past, perfect...), **person and number** (a joint category which stands outside meaningful opposition in the verbal system). These categories are expressed using both synthetic forms (grammatical affixes and inner inflection) and analytical forms (function words). The common categories for both finite and non-finite forms of the verb are voice, aspect, phase, and finitude. The categories of person and number have only synthetic forms, while the category of voice has only analytical forms. The categories of mood, tense, and aspect are expressed using both synthetic and analytical forms.

**Syntactic features:** its ability to be modified by adverbs; finite verbs always perform the function of the predicate; auxiliary verbs have lost their meaning and are used only as form words, thus having only a grammatical function; link verbs are verbs which to a smaller or greater extent have lost their meaning and are used in the compound nominal predicate: to be, to turn, to get, to grow, to remain etc.

Verbs can be classified in several ways based on their syntactic and semantic properties. Morphological classifications include simple (*to sleep*), sound-replacive (*breed – to brood*), expanded (*to misunderstand*), composite (*brainstorm*), and phrasal verbs (*to look after*).

Lexical-morphological classifications categorize verbs as transitive/intransitive (*to eat, to write/to sleep, to cry*), stative/dynamic (*to know, to believe/to sing, to run*), and terminative/durative (*to finish, to stop/to walk, to talk*).

Syntactic classifications divide verbs into finite (*he will sing at the concert*) and non-finite (*to sing is his passion*).

Functional classification categorizes verbs based on their functional significance. Verbs can be classified as notional (*to sleep, to jump*), which have a full lexical meaning and convey the main action of a sentence. Verbs can also be semi-notional, such as modal verbs (*must, should*) and link-verbs (*seem, appear*), which add meaning to a sentence but do not convey the main action. Finally, verbs can be classified as auxiliaries (*have, do, will*), which are used to form various grammatical constructions and convey tense, aspect, mood, and voice.

According to these features and classifications, the verb is the most complex part of speech.

**Adjectives** are words used to express the quality of a noun. **Semantic features:** the lexical-grammatical meaning of qualitiveness. **Morphological features:** a category of comparison (qualitative adjectives - describe the qualitative characteristics of living or non-living things: *funny, white, gold*. Qualitative adjectives have degrees of comparison - Positive, Comparative and Superlative Forms – *big – bigger – the biggest*). Suffixes to form adjectives from nouns, verbs, or other adjectives: e.g. *friendly, beautiful, peaceful*. **Syntactic features:** attribute and predicative. An adjective used as an attribute modifies a noun or a pronoun and usually comes before the noun it modifies, as in (*the red dress*). An adjective used as a predicative follows a linking verb and describes the subject of the sentence (*the dress is red*).

There are 4 main types of adjectives. Possessive adjectives - these adjectives, like possessive pronouns, are used to indicate possession of something: *my, your, his, her*. Interrogative adjectives - used to modify a noun or pronoun by asking a question: *whose, what and which*. Demonstrative adjectives: *this, that, these, those*. Compound adjectives: *curly-haired*.

**Numeral**. This part of speech indicates the number or order of subjects in a sentence. **Semantic feature**: It has a lexical-grammatical meaning of "number". **Morphological features**: It uses typical stem-building suffixes as -teen, -ty. Numerals are divided into only two categories: cardinal that indicates some numerical quantity: *five, seven*. Ordinal means the order of location or the number of an object or person, for example, in a certain queue: *fifth, seventh, tenth*. The category of numerical qualification represented in opposites like seven - seventh. **Syntactic functions**: an attribute, a numeral can modify a noun to indicate a specific quantity or amount; as subjects themselves, representing a specific quantity or amount; in some cases, numerals can function as objects to modify a verb, indicating the frequency or repetition of an action.

**Pronouns**. As parts of speech in English, pronouns are very useful to avoid confusion and over-repetition of the same words. They are used to denote a noun without having to use the name itself. There are several groups of pronouns in the English language: personal - I, you, we, they, he, she, and it. Possessive - mine, yours, ours, theirs, his, hers, its. Reflexive - myself, yourself, yourselves, herself, himself, itself, themselves, ourselves. Demonstrative - this, that, those, these. Interrogative - who, what, which, whose, whom. Defining - every, all, each, everybody, everyone, both, either, other, another, anybody. Indefinite and negative - some, any, no, none, one, many, much, little, few, neither nobody, nothing, somebody, someone, something. Reciprocal - each other, one another. Pronouns can function as the subject of a sentence or clause (*I went to the store*), as the object of a verb or preposition, (*She gave the book to him*), pronouns can be used to indicate possession, (*That is his book*), and to connect sentences or clauses (*He went to the store, but she stayed home*).

Pronouns can be difficult to classify because their classification is fundamentally connected to syntactic semantics and various non-categorical syntactic-semantic features. For example, some researchers have suggested dissolving possessive pronouns into a larger group of personal pronouns, arguing that traditional grammar's classification of pronouns according to meaning is flawed because it mixes the meanings of roots with the meanings of grammatical parts of words. However, it is important to separate the differences in meanings of roots from the differences in meanings of affixes, and in this regard, pronominal words do not differ significantly from non-pronominal words. [6]

An adverb is a part of speech in English that complements a verb, adjective and even other adverbs. **Semantic feature:** adverbiality that provides an ability to denote quality of qualities. **Morphological features:** simple (*here*), derived (*happily*), compound (*everywhere*), and composite (*till now*) adverbs, the degrees of comparison (positive, comparative, and superlative – *loudly, louder/more loudly, loudest/the most loudly*). **Syntactic features:** adverbs are characterized by a combinability with verbs, adjectives, other adverbs and in some cases with nouns. Adverbs can function as adverbial modifiers to a verb, adjective, or another adverb. When used as adverbial modifiers to a verb, they can indicate manner, place, time, degree, or frequency of the action. For example, "*She sings beautifully*" uses the adverb "*beautifully*" as a modifier of manner. Adverbs can also function as adverbial modifiers to an adjective or another adverb to intensify or strengthen the meaning. For example, "*He is extremely happy*" uses the adverb "*extremely*" as a modifier of degree to intensify the meaning of "happy".

### **1.2.2. Functional parts of speech (Articles, Particles, Prepositions, Conjunctions, interjections, modal words) and its peculiarities and problems**

An **article** is a part of speech which is devoid of a full lexical meaning, it used to identify such features of a noun as singular or plural, definite or indefinite. Essentially, it serves as a marker for cognitive operations like identification, classification, and generalization. There are two types of articles: **definite** (the)

articles and **indefinite** (a/an) articles. But some scholars recognize the existence of a third type of article, which is the "zero article." The article serves as a marker for the theme and rheme. It can help signal which noun is the theme and which is the rheme. For example, in the sentence "I saw a cat on the roof", "a cat" is the rheme (new information), while "the roof" is the theme (known information).

**Preposition.** A preposition as a part of speech establishes relationships between words and expresses dependencies between words and the sequence of events in a sentence. A preposition cannot be used independently of other members of the sentence. There are over 100 prepositions in the English language. Based on the purpose of use and functions of prepositions, they can be divided into several main types: prepositions of time: on, at, in, from, to, for, since, ago, before. Prepositions of place: beside, between, from, in front of, under, within. Prepositions of direction: toward. Prepositions of spatial relationship: against, across.

**Conjunctions** can be words or groups of words used to connect two explicit pieces of information within the same text providing logical connection. There are three main types of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions - are used to connect elements, which are grammatically equal: two words, two phrases or two independent sentences: for, and, nor, but, or, yet so. Subordinating conjunctions - a subordinating conjunction is used to introduce a dependent, i.e., subordinate clause: because, if, although, since, until, while. Correlative conjunctions - such conjunctions always come in pairs and are used to combine grammatically equal elements in a sentence. The most used pairs: either ... or, neither ... nor, not only ... but also, both ... and. In most cases, you should not use a comma between two elements. Paired conjunctions must have the same grammatical form.

A **particle** is a grammatically functional word that does not have its own meaning and cannot be a member of a sentence. Its main purpose is to establish a relationship between two sentences in a text. One of these sentences is usually expressed implicitly. **Morphological features:** particles are invariable

1) simple: only, just



2) derivative: merely, simply

3) compound: also [8]

**Semantic features:** Particles are a type of functional word that do not have a specific lexical meaning but serve to add nuance, emphasis, or limitation to a sentence. They are connected to any notional part of speech in the sentence and do not have independent grammatical categories or stem-building elements. English particles can be grouped based on their meaning, including those that indicate negation, emphasis, modality, discourse markers, and phrasal verbs. Overall, particles play an important role in adding subjective shades of meaning to a sentence and can affect its overall tone and interpretation. Depending to their meaning, particles are: limiting particles - are used to emphasize or limit a certain action: *solely, merely, just*. Intensifying particles: *quiet, exactly, simply*. Negative particles: *no, not, never*. Infinitive particle: *to*. Connecting particles: *too, also, as well, either*.

**Modal words** are words that express modality that shows the speaker's attitude towards the event or situation. These words are used only within the sentence in which they appear and are not applicable to other sentences. Modality can be expressed by different words that express the degrees of certainty (*possible, surely, definitely*), express the degrees of obligation (*necessary, perhaps, maybe*), that includes expressions with *be* (*be obliged to, be certain to*)

For example,

- *We think Vlad is coming. We don't know **for certain**.*
- *You **should** study to pass the exam.*

#### **1. 4. Limitations and criticisms of traditional parts of speech system.**

The traditional parts of speech system, which categorizes words into specific groups based on their syntactic and morphological features, has been the foundation of English grammar for centuries. However, this system has faced limitations and criticisms from linguists and language experts.

One major criticism of the traditional parts of speech system is that it does not accurately reflect the complexities of English grammar. For example, some words can function as multiple parts of speech depending on their context, making it difficult to assign them to a single category. This is especially true for words like "like" which can function as verbs, adjectives, or adverbs.

English language researchers identify different numbers of parts of speech, ranging from four to thirteen. The commonly accepted parts of speech include nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. However, there is debate among researchers regarding whether numerals, pronouns, particles, conjunctions, articles, interjections, modal words, and prepositions should be considered separate parts of speech. Some modern linguists have employed traditional classification schemes in their research, while others have incorporated terminology from scientific treatises written in Greek and Latin [9]. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Parts of a sentence are segments of a speech chain that are carriers of generalized structural and functional content, based on which a sentence is formed. The problem is what is the nature and system of these generalized syntactic meanings, which the traditional doctrine does not answer.

The modern understanding of sentence structure breaks the foundations of the traditional theory of clauses; the parts of the sentence are derived from the paradigmatic structure of the category of syntactic units of communication or word forms occupying the same positions in the structure of sentences; perform the functions of parts of a sentence, so they are no longer just words, but parts of a single organic whole.

To become a unit of a sentence, a word must become part of a sentence. Parts of a sentence appear as permanent parts of a sentence, filled with variables - specific words. In this sense, a part of a sentence is a functional and structural unit belonging to a certain area of language – syntax [10].

Many scholars consider the term «part of a sentence» too traditional. Although no other syntactic theory has drawn such sharp criticism as the part-of-sentence theory, at the same time no system of grammatical terms is as viable as

the part-sentence system, and no concepts such as subject, adverb, circumstance, object describe syntax features are so full. Traditional sentence structure divides a simple sentence into a subject and a predicate, because of which the object is taken as part of the predicate [11].

Many modern theories of grammar (for example, dependency grammar), on the contrary, perceive the object (appendix) as a verbal argument, as well as the subject, the difference between them is mainly only in their definition; subject is rated higher than object-app, and is therefore more visible. Criticism of the theory of sentence parts is due to the difficulty of distinguishing and identifying these syntactic categories, which, in turn, follows from the highly developed asymmetry in this section syntax. The viability of the theory of parts of a sentence is explained by the fact that it reflects existing elements syntactic system reflecting elements of objective reality perceived by human consciousness.

All the above refers to one of the main oppositions in the structure of the sentence - the opposition of the main parts of speech against secondary parts of speech, and the first includes the subject. Scholars argue that this hierarchical juxtaposition was the result of a compromise between a logical and a purely linguistic view of the nature of a sentence: since a sentence is a judgment, everything that reflects a judgment is primary, and everything that stands out in a sentence that is not logical is an additional secondary thought. This understanding of hierarchy is preserved in traditional linguistics to this day.

## **CHAPTER 2. ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES THE TO PARTS OF SPEECH CLASSIFICATION**

The problem of distinguishing parts of speech is one of the most relevant in linguistics. Representatives of different linguistic schools raised and resolved questions that in a certain way concern it. The concept of a part of speech has different interpretations. Traditionally, this term refers to lexical-grammatical classes of words, which are distinguished according to three main criteria: semantic, morphological and syntactic, and morphological is considered the leading one, since each part of the language has its own special system of grammatical categories that are common to all words of a certain part of the language.

Parts of speech are one of the most important concepts in grammar. Without it, it is impossible to study the grammatical structure of any language. In addition, parts of speech are an important source of human cognitive activity. With the help of parts of speech, a person differentiates things, their qualities, processes, actions and states and their signs, reveals differences in the real world and carries out its categorization. Parts of speech, thus, are an important way of understanding and interpreting reality.

The problem of classifying words into parts of speech is one of the most controversial in modern linguistics. The attitude of grammarians towards parts of speech and the grounds for their classification has varied considerably over time. In English, grammarians have fluctuated between 3 and 13 parts of speech. There are four approaches to this problem:

- Functional
- Classical
- Structural
- Complex

## **2.1. Functional approach**

Michael Halliday created functional grammar; in 1950, it was called systematic grammar. In functional grammar, the meaning is considered as the object of what the speaker wants the listener to understand. Here, the meaning of the sentence is equated with its function. The purpose of functional grammar is to study the range of relevant meanings and phrases. In addition, one of the most important consequences of the functional view of language is its context. In other words, functional grammar considers the context and brings linguistics and sociology closer together.

According to functional grammar, descriptivist, such as Henry Sweet and Otto Jespersen, built upon the traditional prescriptive system of categorizing parts of speech and expanded upon it based on their observations of actual language use.

Henry Sweet divided words into declinable and indeclinable, which is a division based on form. However, the principle of function is what ultimately determines a word's part of speech. Otto Jespersen further elaborated on Sweet's system and identified three criteria for classification: form, function, and meaning. Based on these criteria, Jespersen classified words into five categories: substantives (nouns), adjectives, pronouns, verbs, and particles (adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections). Jespersen also distinguished nouns (substantives) from noun-words, which are words that can function as nouns but are not necessarily nouns, such as gerunds or infinitives [12].

Overall, both Sweet and Jespersen's systems reflect a descriptive approach to grammar, based on analyzing language as it is actually used, rather than prescribing rigid rules.

## **2.2. Classical approach**

The classical approach was influenced by Latin grammar, dates to ancient times and categorized all words into two groups: declinable and indeclinable. This classification system was also used in early English grammars and placed nouns,

pronouns, verbs, and participles into the declinable group and adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections into the indeclinable group. However, this system is not applicable to the English language because the concept of declinability or indeclinability is not relevant in analytical languages.

However, the number of parts of speech varied among authors. In early English grammars, nouns and adjectives were treated as one part of speech, but later they were regarded as separate parts of speech. Similarly, participles were either a separate part of speech or part of the verb. The authors of the classical scientific grammars have different ideas of the English article. Otto Aespersen and Henry Sweet, for instance, consider it to be a representative of definite or indefinite pronouns according to its variation. But, towards the end of the 19th century, the article was integrated into the adjective by George Curme [12].

### **2.3. Structural or distributional approach**

This approach to the classification of parts of speech can be illustrated by the example of the classification introduced by Charles Fries. This classification is based on the study of word combinations using substitution tests, as a result of which a standard model of fifteen groups of formal words and four main positional classes in English were developed: noun (N), verb (V), adjective (A) and adverb (D). The formal word groups represent these traditional parts of speech and are combined in a specific way according to theoretical principles established by Fries himself. Charles Fries utilized the principle of combinability, which is based on the position of a word in a sentence. This allowed him to distinguish between different groups of function words that follow similar patterns of substitution. He argued that these classes and groups cannot be equated with the traditional parts of speech as he wanted to avoid traditional terminology and create a classification of words based on distributive analysis, that is, the ability of a word to combine with other words of different types. Although Fries was a structuralist, he did not use the term "function" to describe the position of a word, as he believed that function referred

to meaning rather than position. However, some structuralists criticized Fries' classification, leading to a return to traditional terminology that used the criterion of form and, in addition, position [13].

#### **2.4. Complex approach**

As it was already mentioned, in modern linguistics, parts of languages are distinguished according to three criteria: semantic, formal and functional. This approach can be used as an inclusive one. The semantic criterion contains the grammatical definition of a whole class of words (general grammatical meaning). The formal criteria reveal paradigmatic properties, such as the corresponding grammatical categories, word forms, specific declensions, and derivational features. The functional criteria refer to the syntactic function of words in the sense of their connectivity.

Thus, when describing the features of these parts of the language, it is necessary to take into account a) semantic, b) morphological and c) syntactic features.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion I want to say that the classification of word classes has always been one of the most controversial issues in linguistics. It is a complex task that has undergone changes throughout history. The traditional parts of speech system, which includes notional parts of speech such as nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, numerals, and adverbs, as well as functional parts of speech such as articles, particles, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and modal words, has limitations and criticisms. The peculiarities and problems associated with each part of speech make it challenging to classify them accurately.

Alternative approaches to parts of speech classification have been developed, including the functional, classical, structural, and complex approaches, which aim to better reflect the complexities of the English language.

Overall, a deep understanding of the English language and its structure is required to classify parts of speech accurately. While the traditional parts of speech system provide a useful framework for language learning, it is important to consider alternative approaches and recognize its limitations to improve language understanding. Hence, it is essential to have a deep understanding of the English language and its structure to classify parts of speech accurately.

In my work, I described the problem of parts of speech classification. To be more precise, I studied different approaches considering this issue.



## **Резюме**

Курсова робота на тему “Проблеми частин мови в сучасній англійській мові” складається зі вступу, двох розділів, висновку, резюме та списку використаних джерел. У першому розділі “Традиційна класифікація частин мови” описано проблему з історичної точки зору та присвячено увагу кожній окремій частині мови. У другому розділі “Альтернативні підходи до класифікації частин мови” представлена інформація про 4 основні теорії та лінгвістів, що над ними працювали.

Дана курсова робота містить 29 сторінок.

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