Review Article

Form - Function Relations in English

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Abstract: English is an affluent language as it retains the flexibility of forms and the multiplicity of messages conveyed through such forms. Phrases and sentences which are the two forms of linguistic structures can serve a number of grammatical and communicative functions. A grammatical function of language refers to the role of phrasal forms in a sentence as a subject, a predicator, a complement and an adjunct. A communicative function denotes the purpose of using the forms as the sentences. The purposes may be to advise, request, order, invite, greet, warn, thank and so on. A key purpose of this article is to expose form- function relations in English. The article writer mustered some phrases and sentences as the nominal data from the books on communication in English. Phrases and sentences which are considered forms in the study are analyzed from the perspectives of their grammatical and communicative functions respectively. This article winds up with a striking remark that a phrasal form can serve a number of grammatical functions and a sentence form can serve numerous communicative functions and vice versa. Furthermore, there is not always one to one correspondence between a linguistic form and its grammatical or communicative function.
Keywords: Form, communicative function, grammatical function, phrase, sentence.

INTRODUCTION

English has been taught and studied at schools and colleges as a compulsory as well as special subject in Nepal for a long time. Its popularity and necessity is soaring day by day. English, known as a lingua franca, is one of the most prestigious languages. It is a globally acclaimed language for communication. But most of the people speak English without actually understanding the form- function relations. Not only the ordinary persons, but also the teachers use English without understanding forms and their grammatical and communicative functions well. English language learners need to comprehend both the forms and the functions of linguistic units to convey and receive precise information for accomplishing good communication. This article aims at exposing form-function relations through appropriate instances.

This article is based on the qualitative research which employs forms and functions as nominal data that are collected by going through the books and journal articles written on communication in English and English for communication. Subedi (2017) takes communication as "the process of organizing and transmitting information to the audience or receiver through a channel" (p. 4). Communication plays a prominent role in our daily lives. Ahmad (2016) takes communication skill as "a skill which involves systematic and continuous process of speaking, listening and understanding" (p. 478). It is quite impossible for human beings to live alone without giving and getting information. It is necessary in each and every field of human activities. Language is a vehicle of our thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. Good communication in English is impossible without good knowledge of English. Abdikarimova, Tashieva, Tashbolotkyzy and Abdullaeva (2021)

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mention that "Communication skills are considered as ability used to give and receive different kinds of information" (p. 83) . One of the aspects of the good knowledge of English involves having sound knowledge of form-function relations in English. This article will be fruitful for the English language learners.

2. Theoretical Review of Literature

Theoretical review of literature encompasses the definition and concept of language, grammar, forms and functions.

2.1 Language and Grammar

Language is an extraordinary possession of human beings on the earth. One of the influential factors to make us stand differently from other creatures is the employment of language in our communication. Hockett (1970) views language as "the most valuable single possession of the human race" (p. 1).   Human language is creative and potential. Yule (1997) affirms that language has "a feature of creating novel utterances" (p. 22) . We can generate an unlimited number of innovative expressions from a single form. Language learning is an intricate task. Doff (1997) pinpoints that learning language "involves being exposed to samples of language that we can understand; from this we can acquire the rules of language and apply them to make an unlimited number of original sentences" (p. 158). Furthermore, Brown (1994) characterizes language to be "systematic and generative" (p. 5). Language can be learnt through studying grammar that deals with the entire system and structure of a language. It is the study of rules for forming words and their arrangement in sentences as Carter and McCarthy (2006)   take grammar to be "concerned with how sentences and structures are formed" (p. 2) . Similarly, Cowan (2016) views grammar as "the set of rules that describe how words and groups of words can be arranged to form sentences in a particular language" (p. 3). Tickoo (2009)   by focusing on the importance of grammar remarks that it retains "an important place in one's knowledge of a second or foreign language. It can provide a sound knowledge of usable rules, especially when teaching focuses on aspects of grammar that constitute the basic building block of the language" (p. 165). Hošková-Mayerová (2014) asserts that "specialized language and professional communication is not just a matter of professional lexis and used morpho-syntactic structures; both phenomena play a vital role and are essential for communication and understanding" (p. 645). Studying grammar of English is essential for the learners who use English as a foreign language.

2.2 Forms and Functions

Form has multiple nomenclatures such as a structure, a linguistic exponent, a linguistic component or a language unit that is used by the speaker to convey his / her information to the audience. Sharma (2020)   assumes forms and functions to be vital aspects of grammar and he defines a grammatical function as "the syntactic role played by a word or phrase in the context of a particular clause or sentence" (p. 3) . Soanes and Stevenson (2003) take a form as "the visible shape or configuration of something" (p. 678). In language, the shape is formed with the arrangement of words. Language forms deal with the internal grammatical structure of words, phrases as well as the words employed in the construction of sentences.

A language function refers to what speakers or writers do with language as they are engaged with content in interacting with others. Functions signify the active use of language for a specific purpose. They use language forms to maintain functions like asking, requesting, warning, advising, informing, persuading and so on depending on the context. Blundell, Higgens and Middlemiss (2009) proclaim "We only speak or write with a purpose in mind: to help someone to see our point of view, perhaps, to ask their advice, or to reach agreement with them (p. v).   They call these purposes the function of language. The language form in this article is viewed from the phrasal and sentential levels. It means a noun phrase; a verb phrase, an adjective phrase, a prepositional phrase, and an adverb phrase are the language forms at the phrasal level.   Phrases, which perform grammatical functions, are the constituents of a sentence.

Similarly, an assertive sentence, an interrogative sentence, an imperative sentence, an exclamatory sentence and an optative sentence are the language forms at the sentential level. Sentences execute communicative functions such as informing, requesting, asking and so on.

2.3 Types of Phrases

A phrase is a set of words which functions as a unit of grammar. Crystal (2008) defines a phrase as "a term used in grammatical analysis to refer to a single element of structure typically containing more than one word, and lacking the subject-predicate structure" (p. 367). Phrases constitute a sentence.

Noun Phrase (NP): A noun phrase is essentially a group of words with a noun as its head word. Aarts and Aarts (1986) presume a noun phrase as "a phrase which has a noun as its most important constituent" (p. 60) . For example: I saw a black cat. The man is kind.

Verb Phrase (VP): A verb phrase consists of a group of words with a verb as the head word. Quirk and Greenbaum (1996) assert that "the verb phrase consists of a 'head verb' preceded by one or more auxiliary verbs" (p.17). For example: I can play chess. It has been raining heavily.

Adjective Phrase (Adj. P): An adjective phrase is a phrase in which the head word is an adjective. Aarts (1997) mentions that an adjective phrase is "headed by an adjective"(p. 274). For example: She is kind. I bought a very big bag.

Adverb Phrase (Adv. P): An adverb phrase comprises a group of words which functions like an adverb. An adverb is the head word in an adverb phrase. Carter and McCarthy (2012) assert that "an adverb may function alone as the head of the adverb phrase or it may have dependents of various kinds" (p. 455). For example: He sang sweetly. She danced so badly that I left the place.

Prepositional Phrase (Prep. P): A prepositional phrase is a group of words that begins with a preposition and ends in a noun or a pronoun. Cowan (2016) takes it as a phrase "with a preposition head and a following noun phrase" (p. 671). For example: She is at home. He is with her.

2.4 Grammatical Functions of Phrases

A phrase can perform various grammatical functions depending on its place in the sentence and its association with another constituent. Grammatical functions are as follows:

Subject: The subject of a sentence is the person, place, idea or thing that does the action or that is being described. It is what performs the action. Aarts (1997) defines a subject "as the entity that carries out the action expressed by the verb in a sentence" (p. 283). Cowan (2016) takes a subject as "a noun phrase that comes before the verb and used many cases is an agent" (p. 673) For example: Ram works hard. The book is thick.

Predicate: A predicate embraces a verb phrase with or without other constituents in a sentence. Aarts (1997) asserts that the predicate of a sentence is syntactically defined as "comprising all the linguistic material to the right of the subject" (p. 281). For example: He is sleeping. Ram has been writing a letter for an hour.

Predicator: A predicator is the central syntactic element in a sentence. Every sentence must require a verb. Huddleston (1996) asserts that "a verb phrase in predicate function is predicator" (p. 52). For example: She is laughing. He will buy a car.

Complement: A complement is a word, phrase or clause that is necessary to complete the meaning of an expression. Huddleston (1996) defines a complement as "a function that we shall be using in the analysis of other construction than the verb phrase" (p. 52). There are six types of complement. They are a direct object, an indirect object, a benefactive object, a subject attribute, an object attribute, and a predicator complement.

Direct Object (Do): A direct object is the receiver of action within a sentence. Aarts (1997) assumes direct object as "a function label which denotes an entity that undergoes whatever it is that the preceding verb expresses" (p. 275). A direct object answers the question "what?". For example: He asked me some questions. He gave me a book.

Indirect Object (IO): An indirect object answers the question of "to whom", "for whom" or "for what". Cowan (2016) affirms that an indirect object is "a noun phrase that occurs between the verb and its direct object in the dative movement pattern" (p. 668). For example: He gave Ram a book. The asked the students three questions.

Benefactive Object (BO): A benefactive object of a verb is the person, animal, or thing that benefits from the action of the verb. A benefactive object may occur with an intransitive verb. Aarts and Aarts (1986) assert that a benefactive object "resembles the indirect; it immediately precedes the direct object constituent" (p. 140). For example: He bought his son a car. She brought her husband a coat.

Subject Attribute (SA): A subject attribute is associated with the subject of a sentence. Aarts and Aarts (1986) affirm that "the function subject attribute is associated with a constituent which complements the verb and is related to the subject of the sentence" (p. 140). For example: Ram is very honest. She is an honest teacher.

Object Attribute (OA): An object attribute adds more details about the object of the sentence. Aarts and Aarts (1986) mention that there is a relationship between the direct object constituent and the object attribute constituent that "what is expressed by the object attribute is predicated of the direct object constituent" (p. 141). For example: He called me a donkey. She painted the windows green.

Predicator Complement (PC): A predicator complement constituent bears a resemblance to the direct object, but it cannot be used as the subject in the passive sentences. Aarts and Aarts (1986) mention that the predicator complement might be used "with reference to all those constituents that

obligatorily complement the verb" (p. 142). For example: This sac contains sugar. She has three cats.

Adverbial / Adjunct (A): This constituent generally answers the questions introduced by 'when', 'where', 'how much', and 'how often', 'why' etc. It is a portion of a sentence that contains extra information; it is not necessary to complete the

meaning of a sentence. Aarts (1997) holds adjunct as "a function label which indicates the where, why, when etc. in a proposition (p. 274) . For example: She is at school. I met her yesterday.

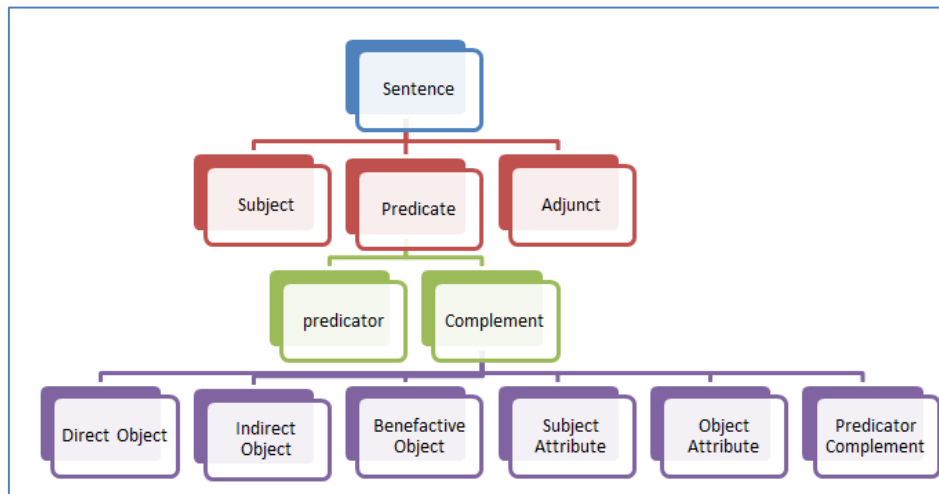The different grammatical functions are demonstrated in the figure below:

Fig-1: Grammatical Functions of Phrases

2.5 Types of Sentences

A sentence is the largest unit of grammar. It provides the readers with a complete sense or meaning. Wales (2001) asserts that "the sentence is usually taken as one of the most significant units of grammatical analysis, and the largest: the other being clause, phrase, word and morpheme" (p. 356) . Andersen (2014) defines a sentence as a complete set of words that conveys meaning, and asserts that "a sentence can communicate o a statement, a command, an exclamation or a question" (p. 1). There are fundamentally four types of sentences: assertive (statement), imperative, interrogative and exclamatory.

Assertive sentence / Statement: An assertive sentence, which begins with a subject, is one that makes a statement or assertion. Such a sentence can be either affirmative or negative. Eastwood (2002) proclaims that "the basic use of a statement is to give information (p. 16). For example: Peter is working hard. She does not drink coffee.

Imperative sentence: An imperative sentence begins with a main verb or "do not plus a main verb". Sometimes it can commence with please or kindly. It is a sentence that expresses a command, request or advice. Eastwood (2002) asserts that "the basic use of the imperative is to give orders, to get someone to do something" (p. 21). For example:

Open the windows. Do not eat the stale food. Please help me.

Interrogative sentence: An interrogative sentence is such a sentence that is used in asking question with the use of a wh-word or an auxiliary verb at the beginning and a question mark at the end of the sentence. Eastwood (2002) claims that "the most basic use of a question is to ask for information" (p. 20) . For example: Where are you? Can you help me?

Exclamatory sentence: An exclamatory sentence is a type of sentence that expresses sudden surprise, joy, pain, or strong feeling. It uses an exclamatory word and / or a sign. Eastwood (2002) affirms that "an exclamation is a sentence spoken with emphasis and feeling. We often use a pattern with how or what" (p. 24). For example: What a beautiful girl! **Alas**! he is ruined.

Additionally, there is one sentence that is lesson common. It is an optative sentence.

Optative sentence: An optative sentence, no so common, is one that expresses the wish (Gautam, 2005). Fundamentally, all the sentence forms except an optative sentence are assumed to have three specifically shared informative, expressive and directive functions along with their own sentence-wise presumed or common functions.

Table-1: Usual Functions of Sentences

Sentence Type	Specific Functions		
	Informative	**Expressive**	**Directive**
Assertive	The rat is big.	I had a great time.	I would like some tea.
Interrogative	But, Isn't this paper A-4 size?	Isn't that great?	Don't you want to help me?
Imperative	Read the pages 1-5 for the test.	Have a nice day.	Shut the doors.
Exclamatory	The water is much too cold!	I'm really excited!	It's late!

This table exhibits that a sentence is actually flexible in generating multifarious functions.

3. Method and Material

This article grounded on the qualitative research employs categorical data in terms of phrases and sentences. It analyzes phrases as forms by exploring their grammatical functions and sentences as forms by reconnoitering their communicative functions. Form-function relations are highlighted with apt instances. The examples are formed after going through relevant books and journal articles.

4. Demonstration

Demonstration comprises a phrase with multiple grammatical functions, a grammatical function realized by manifold phrases, a sentence having numerous communicative functions, and a communicative function expressed by more than one sentence form.
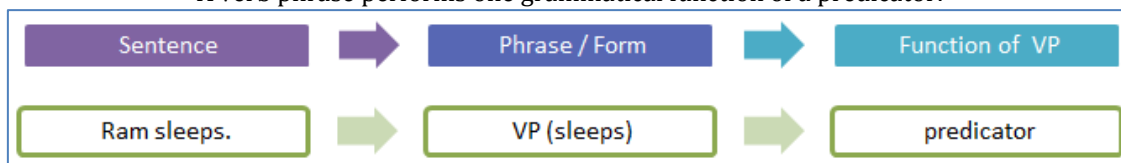
4.1 A Phrase with Multiple Grammatical Functions

Functions realized by different phrases are a subject, a predicator, a direct object, an indirect object, a benefactive object, a subject attribute, an object attribute, predicator complement and an adjunct.
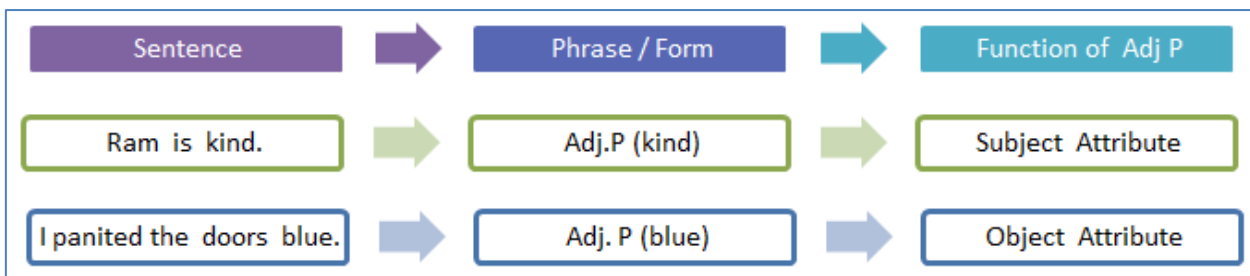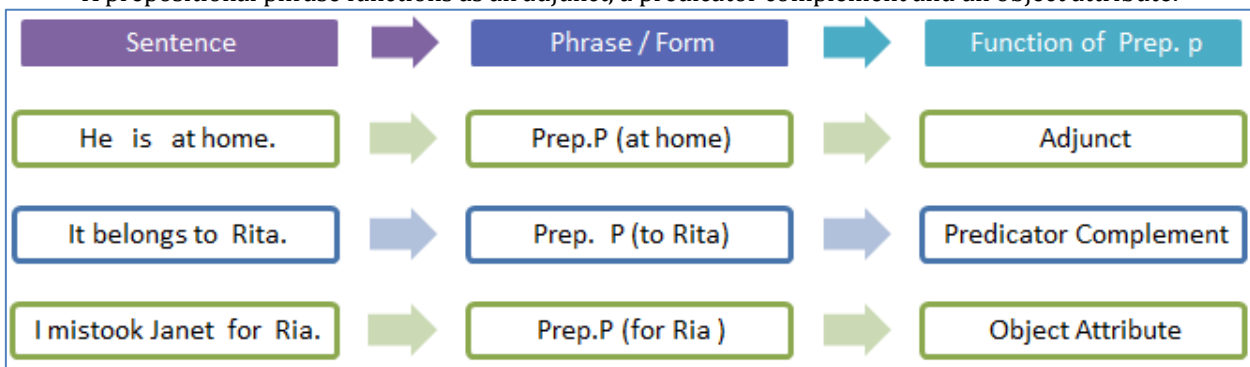
A noun phrase can have numerous grammatical functions:
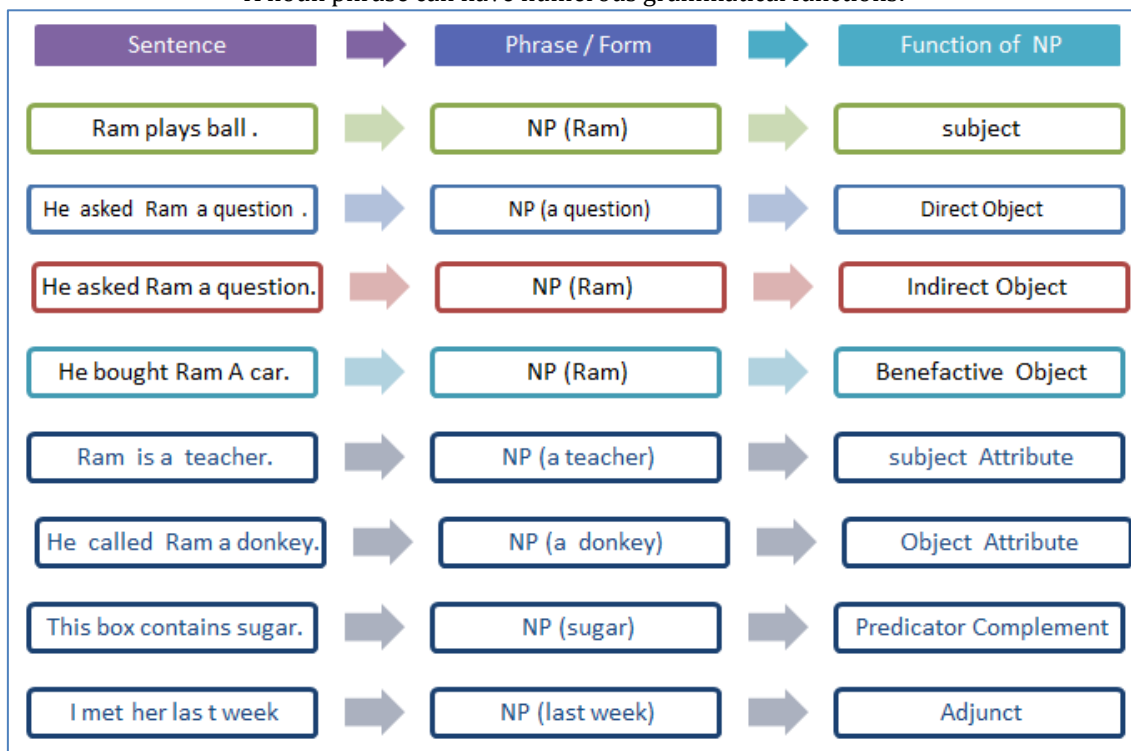
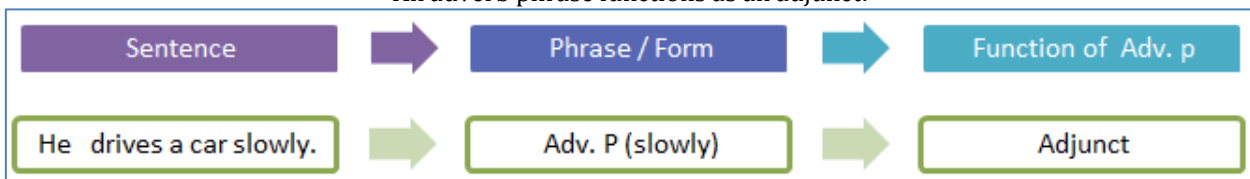A verb phrase performs one grammatical function of a predicator:

An adjective phrase functions as a subject attribute and an object attribute:

Sentence		Phrase / Form		Function of Adj P
Ram is kind.	→	Adj.P (kind)	→	Subject Attribute
I panited the doors blue.	→	Adj. P (blue)	→	Object Attribute

A prepositional phrase functions as an adjunct, a predicator complement and an object attribute:

Sentence		Phrase / Form		Function of Prep. p
He is at home.	→	Prep.P (at home)	→	Adjunct
It belongs to Rita.	→	Prep. P (to Rita)	→	Predicator Complement
I mistook Janet for Ria.	→	Prep.P (for Ria)	→	Object Attribute

An adverb phrase functions as an adjunct:

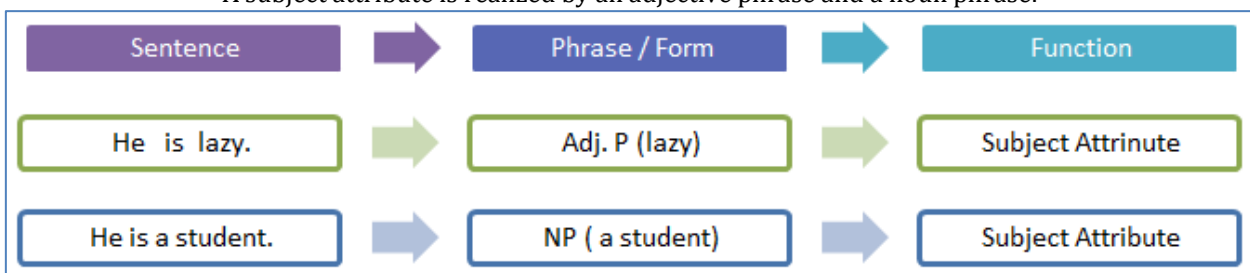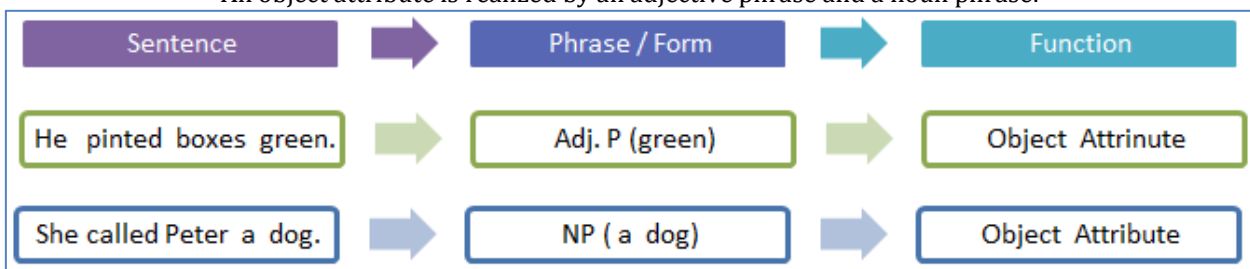| Sentence		Phrase / Form		Function of Adv. p
He drives a car slowly.	→	Adv. P (slowly)	→	Adjunct

All these examples show that a particular phrase can perform different grammatical roles, however each a verb phrase and an adverb phrase performs a single role.

## 4. 2 A Grammatical Function Realized by Different Phrases

A subject attribute is realized by an adjective phrase and a noun phrase:

Sentence		Phrase / Form		Function
He is lazy.	→	Adj. P (lazy)	→	Subject Attrinute
He is a student.	→	NP (a student)	→	Subject Attribute

An object attribute is realized by an adjective phrase and a noun phrase:

Sentence		Phrase / Form		Function
He pinted boxes green.	→	Adj. P (green)	→	Object Attrinute
She called Peter a dog.	→	NP (a dog)	→	Object Attribute

A predicator complement is realized by a noun phrase and a prepositional phrase:
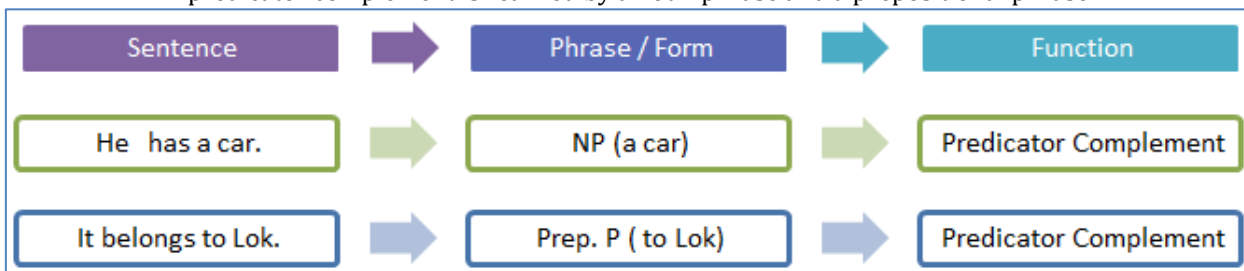
An adjunct is realized by a preposition phrase, a noun phrase and an adverb phrase:
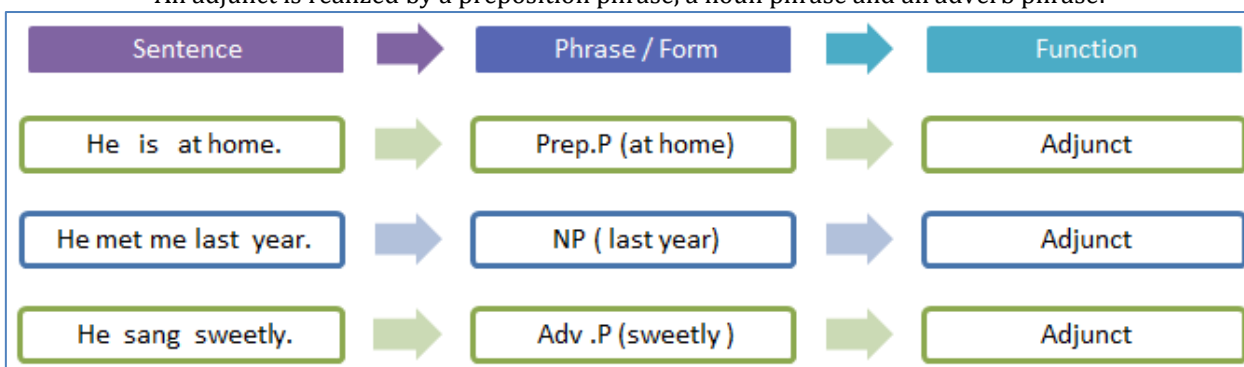
4.3 A sentence with Different Communicative Functions

A statement sentence, an interrogative sentence, an imperative sentence and an exclamatory sentence can serve various communicative functions.

Some of the communicative functions revealed by an assertive sentence are as follows:
He can drive a car. (Ability))
You may go out. (Permission)
She may come here. (Possibility)
I'm certain that she didn't do it. (Certainty)
I'd like to drive a car. (Desire)
I' m pleased with it. (Pleasure)
It really makes me mad. (Displeasure)
It's great. (Approval)
I'd rather go fishing. (Preference)
I think so. (Agreement)
You can't bring your dog here. (Prohibition)
You should work hard. (Advice)
You have to do it. (Obligation)
I'm grateful to you. (Thankfulness)
Your bag is really good. (Compliment)
An interrogative sentence has the following communicative functions:
Where is Ram? (Asking)
Can you give me a book? (Request)
May I come in? (Permission)
Would you like to use pen? (Offering)
Why are you late again? (Complaining)
Would you like to join me for a coffee? (Invitation)
Are you in a hurry? (Seeking information)
Why don't you come in? (Suggesting)
Who do you think you are? (Threatening)

Isn't it cute? (Compliment)
 Why don't you consult your doctor? (Advice)
An imperative sentence can perform the following communicative functions:
Meet me tomorrow. (Advice)
Mind your head. (Warning)
Bring me a glass of water. (Order)
Attend my birthday party. (Invitation)
March on. (Command)
Have a good journey. (Wish)
Give me some money. (Begging)
Go ahead. (Encouragement)
Read the book carefully. (Suggestion)
Don't eat the stale food. (Forbidding)
Please give me your book. (Requesting)
Please have a piece of bread. (Offering)
Please give up smoking. (Suggesting)
Please help me. (Urging)

In the above sentences, a particular linguistic form (Please+ v[1]) has been used to serve diverse communicative functions.

An exclamatory sentence performs the following communicative functions:
Oh! I've missed the first bus. (Surprise)
Alas! I am ruined. (Sorrow)
Hurrah! my brother has won the match. (Joy)
Bravo! you have done well. (Congratulations)
Alas! how foolish I am. (Confession)

4. 4 A Communicative Function Realized by Different Sentences

In English, several exponents can be used to serve a communicative function. The following

exponents serve a communicative function of request, for example:

Can you help me with this? (Interrogative Sentence)
Please give me your pen to write. (Imperative Sentence)
 I'm sorry to trouble you, but... (Assertive Sentence)
Read this for me, will you? (Imperative Sentence followed by a tag question)

5. CONCLUSION

Demonstration clearly reveals that a noun phrase can execute the grammatical functions as a subject, a direct object, an indirect object, a benefactive object, a subject attribute, an object attribute, a predicator complement and an adjunct. A verb phrase functions as a predicator, an adjective phrase functions as a subject attribute and an object attribute. A prepositional phrase functions as an adjunct, an objective attribute and a predicator complement and an adverb phrase functions an adjunct. Generally, all the sentences except an optative sentence are assumed to have informative, expressive and directive functions applied in a broad way. An optative sentence has an expressive function. A phrase can perform different grammatical functions and a grammatical function can also be realized by different phrases. Similarly, a sentence form may have multifarious communicative functions, and a communicative function tends to be realized by various sentences. This article is beneficial to the persons who are the English teachers and the students who are interested in learning English Grammar.

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