

7. Intransitive Sentences and their Stative Resultants

Summary

An intransitive sentence or verb is defined as one which alters or affects its subject. Intransitive sentences include an element, called the resultant, which describes the state of the subject after action of the verb. It is possible to construct a resultant sentence which describes the resultant state of the subject.

This chapter is concerned with intransitive verbs whose resultant is a stative attribute or noun. If the resultant is an attribute, the resultant sentence is attributive. If the resultant is a noun, the resultant sentence is an identification between the subject and the resultant. The subject of both an intransitive sentence and its resultant sentence is the topic unless an element is in focus.

Intransitive sentences are of four sorts, agential, instrumental, inceptive, and participation. In an agential intransitive sentence, the subject is an agent who acts on him/herself. Where there exists a transitive verb of the same meaning, the agential intransitive is equivalent to the reflexive form of the transitive. For some verbs, only the agential intransitive form exists, and for other verbs, only the reflexive transitive, depending on the language. Agential intransitives may have an instrument.

In an instrumental intransitive, the subject is an instrument which acts on itself. As for an agential intransitive, there may be a particular instrumental intransitive verb or a reflexive form of the corresponding instrumental transitive verb.

In an inceptive sentence, the subject undergoes an involuntary change for which there is no agent and in general no instrument.

Some agential intransitive and inceptive verbs exist in their own right. Others correspond to a transitive verb which expresses the same process, and in that case languages construct the intransitive sentence by various changes to the transitive verb or sentence structure. Six different intransitive structures are listed.

An agential intransitive sentence may occur for a locative, a dependency, an appliance, and an identification. An inceptive sentence may occur for a creation/destruction, a locative, an effect, a dependency, a constituent, and an identification.

The perfective participle of an agential intransitive or inceptive verb describes the state of the subject after action of the verb, and may take the same resultant as the verb.

A participation sentence expresses an intentional action which is directed towards a target without altering it. In different languages, participation verbs may be connected directly or indirectly to the target, and may be expressed by a verb which is reflexive or not reflexive. Participation sentences may have an instrument.

Participation verbs do not have a resultant or express a completed process. They therefore do not have a perfective participle. They may possess a target participle, which describes the target, and a target sentence whose subject is the target of the participation sentence.

Terms Defined or Introduced

Intransitive, reflexive, inceptive, participation, target.

Overview

In the previous chapter, a transitive sentence was defined as one which alters or affects a noun called a patient to a form called a resultant. The action is effected by an animate agent and/or an inanimate instrument. If the agent or instrument is the topic the sentence is active, and if the patient is the topic

the sentence is passive. The outcome may be expressed by a resultant sentence of which the patient of the transitive verb is the subject.

An *intransitive* sentence also expresses a process of change, but one which only alters or affects its subject. In the traditional terminology, it does not transit or carry over its action to an object. In the terminology of the previous chapter, the subject is the patient, and there is no distinction between active and passive. The changed form of the subject after action of the verb can again be called the resultant. The construction of an intransitive sentence is therefore “subject-verb-resultant”, in which the verb is intransitive. In some cases, the resultant is fully expressed by the verb: “subject-verb”.

As with transitive sentences, the resultant of an intransitive verb may be an attribute or a noun, so that the resultant sentence is attributive or an identification, and has the form “subject-resultant”. The resultant sentence is indicated by “→”:

“Mary went to Cambridge.”	→	“Mary was at Cambridge.”
“Henry fell ill with fever.”	→	“Henry was ill with fever.”
“Bernard became Chairman.”	→	“Bernard was Chairman.”

Evidently, the same stative sentences could be the outcome of a transitive sentence:

“Her parents sent Mary to Cambridge.” “The fever made Henry ill.”
“They elected Bernard Chairman.”

Since the purposes of an intransitive sentence and its resultant are to provide information concerning the subject, then (unless an element is in focus) the subject is the topic. Thus, “Mary” is the topic of “Mary went to Cambridge”. In comparison, in the sentence “It was Mary who went to Cambridge”, “Mary” is in focus and therefore the comment; “who went to Cambridge” is the topic. Similarly, “Mary” is the topic of “Mary was at Cambridge”, and “who was at Cambridge” is the topic of “It was Mary who was at Cambridge”.

In this chapter, we are only concerned with intransitive sentences and verbs whose resultant is stative. As Chapter 11. will show, there are intransitive verbs whose resultant is dynamic.

This concept of an intransitive sentence is found in all grammars, and occurs in various forms in all languages. However, it in fact covers at least four different sentence constructions, which we shall examine in more detail below:

- (i) *Agential intransitive or reflexive.* The subject is an agent who intentionally acts on him/herself.
- (ii) *Instrumental intransitive or reflexive.* The subject is an instrument which acts on itself as a result of some physical process.
- (ii) *Inceptive.* The subject is not an agent and is involuntarily subject to the action of the verb.
- (iii) *Participation.* The subject is an agent who intentionally engages in an action, often with others, towards an object without altering or affecting it.

The perfective participle of an intransitive verb describes the state or condition of the subject after action of the verb, since it is the subject which is altered, and may take the same resultant.

The Agential Intransitive or Reflexive Sentence

The following are typical examples of an agential intransitive sentence:

“Lloyd George resigned from office.”	→	“Lloyd George was out of office.”
“Henry shaved with his electric razor.”	→	“Henry was shaved.”
“Sheila changed into new clothes.”	→	“Sheila was wearing new clothes.”
“Mary went to Cambridge.”	→	“Mary was at Cambridge.”
“John is coming from London.”	→	“John is arrived from London.”
“The patient sat up in bed.”	→	“The patient was sitting up in bed.”

“Bernard drove back home.” → “Bernard was back home.”

In each of these, the subject acts so as to change his or her own state or condition, which may be expressed by a resultant stative sentence. They are mostly perfective sentences. If they are imperfective (“Henry was shaving”, “Sheila was changing”, etc) the resultant expresses the expected state after the process is completed. The resultant sentence may also be constructed with the perfective participle:

“Sheila was changed into new clothes.” “Mary was gone to Cambridge.”
“The patient was sat up in bed.”

Many of these intransitive verbs can be compared to a corresponding transitive verb. In the transitive verb, the subject is acting on another person. If the person on whom the transitive action is occurring is the same as the subject, the verb is *reflexive* and the object is represented by a reflexive pronoun. The meaning is then the same as the above intransitive sentences:

“Henry shaved himself with his electric razor.”
→ “Henry was shaved.”
“Sheila changed herself into new clothes.”
→ “Sheila was wearing new clothes.”
“The patient sat himself up in bed.” → “The patient was sitting up in bed.”
“Bernard drove himself back home.”
→ “Bernard was back home.”

For some verbs in some languages, there is an alternative construction in which the intransitive verb is a variation of the transitive, although the reflexive construction may also be used:

“George raised himself from his seat.”/
“George rose from his seat.” → “George was up.”
“George laid himself on the couch”/
“George lay on the couch.” → “George was lying on the couch.”

For other verbs (“resign”, “go”, “come”), the intransitive verb does not have a transitive equivalent in English. However, it is not difficult to construct a reflexive sentence with the same meaning:

“Lloyd George stood himself down from office.”
“Mary took herself off to Cambridge.”
“John is bringing himself from London.”

In general, it appears that all agential intransitive sentences are equivalent to a reflexive transitive. It is a detail of each verb and each language as to whether a reflexive or agential intransitive is used. In English, there are reflexives for which no agential intransitive is available:

“She lifted herself up.” (reflexive) *“She lifted up.” (invalid intransitive).
“He installed himself in his new home.” (reflexive)
*“He installed in his new home.” (invalid intransitive)

An agential intransitive may have an instrument:

“Henry shaved with his father’s razor.” “Bernard drove home by car.”

It should be noted that the reflexive referred to here is that in which the agent alters or affects him or herself. Another use of the reflexive is equally common, in which the agent provides something to him or herself. This is not the same as an agential intransitive, and is discussed in Chapter 9.:

“He made himself a cup of tea.”
“She asked herself what it meant.”
“He bought himself a suit.”

In many languages, the majority of agential intransitive verbs (other than verbs of motion) are constructed as reflexive. In Russian, the reflexive pronoun is an enclitic “-sya” or “s”:

“On vozvrashchaet knigu v biblioteku.” “He returns the book to the library.”
 “On vozvrashchaetsya domoi.” “He returns home.” [He returns-himself home.]
 “Ona odela detei.” “She dressed the children.”
 “Ona vseгда khorosho odevalas” “She always dressed well.”
 [She always well dressed-herself.]

The same is true of Romance languages:

French: “Asseyez-vous donc.” “Please take a seat.” [Sit yourself, then.]

Spanish: “Ella se vistió.” “She got dressed.” [She herself dressed.]

Italian: “Dopo essersi lavata, fece colazione.” “After having washed, she had breakfast.”
 [After being-herself washed, she-had breakfast.]

In other languages, a reflexive construction is not generally used. The intransitive is formed as a variation of the transitive. In Greek, the agential intransitive is a variation called the deponent, which is the same as the passive, and is here translated as reflexive:

“Ἡ Ἑλένιτσα τώρα μπορεί και ντύνεται μόνη της.”
 “Little Helen can get dressed by herself now.”
 [The little-Helen now can also dress-herself by herself.]
 “Ἐρχεται στο σπίτι μου.” “She comes to my house.” [She comes-herself to-the house my.]

In Welsh, the reflexive is formed with the prefix “ym-”:

“Estynnir croeso cynnes i bawb.” “A warm welcome is extended to all.”
 [Is-extended welcome warm to all.]
 “Roedd y gath yn ymestyn o flaen y tân.” “The cat was stretched out in front of the fire.”
 [Was the cat in extend-itself in front the fire.]

In Arabic, the reflexive is formed with the prefix “ta-”:

“hiya taʿkifu ʿalā l-dirāsati” “She was immersing herself in study.”
 “kullamā taqaddamnā laḥiqnā bi-l-šamsi”
 “The more we advanced [ourselves], [the more] we caught up with the sun.”

Indonesian/Malay uses the prefixes “di-“ to form the passive (as described in the previous chapter) and “ber-“ to form the intransitive:

<u>transitive</u>	<u>passive</u>	<u>intransitive</u>
mencukur “shave”	dicukur “be shaved”	bercukur “shave (oneself)”
mandikan “bathe”	dimandi “be bathed”	bermandi “take a bath”

“Dia sembunyikan wangnya.” “He hid his money.” [He hid money-his.]
 “Dia bersembunyi.” “He hid himself.”

Japanese relates the intransitive to the transitive by a variety of different suffixes in “-ru” and “-su”:

“tomodachi o atsumeru” “assemble one’s friends” [friends (object) collect]
 “tomodachi ga atsumaru” “friends (subject) gather”
 “shichiji ni otōto o okosu” “rouse younger brother at seven o’clock”
 [seven-o’clock-at younger-brother (object) rouse]
 “asa shichiji ni okiru” “get up at seven o’clock in the morning”
 [morning seven-o’clock-at rise]
 “ito o tōsu” “pass a thread (through a needle)” [thread (object) pass]

“densha ga ie no mae o tōru.” “The trams pass in front of the house.”
[Tram_(subject) house-of front_(object) pass.]

Since Chinese words do not alter, transitive and intransitive verbs are generally distinguished because transitive verbs have an object:

“Tā kāi chē qù shàngbān.” “He drives to work.” [He drive car go start-work.]
“kāi chē sòng mǒurén huí jiā” “to drive someone home” [drive car give someone back home]

Referring to the functions of a transitive sentence listed in Chapter 6., we see that some may be expressed by an agential intransitive and some may not. With exception of verbs of motion, most are reflexives:

- A person is assumed not to create or destroy him/herself. The creation function therefore does not arise.
- A person may transform him/herself:

“Jane made herself ill with worry.” “Jean graduated in Latin.”

- A person is assumed not to increase or decrease his or her constituents or dimensions. The constituent function therefore does not arise.
- The effect function is involuntary and is therefore not agential.
- A freedom is usually intentional and can therefore arise through a reflexive action:

“She freed herself from the entanglement.”

- The dependency and relief functions can be intentional and therefore may arise through a reflexive sentence:

“He put himself at risk of bankruptcy.” “She protected herself from the sun.”

- The appliance function is intentional and therefore can be reflexive:

“She bandaged herself.” “He brushed himself down.”

- An identification can arise through a reflexive:

“Napoleon declared himself Emperor.” “She set herself up as an estate agent.”

As already mentioned, the locative function can arise through a verb of motion. Verbs of motion are generally expressed as agential intransitives, not as reflexives. Because there is often no close transitive equivalent, there may be no need to indicate that they are intransitive. They have locative resultant sentences like the transitive locative function (Chapter 6.):

“She went to the cinema.” → “She was at the cinema.”
“He came downstairs.” → “He was downstairs.”
“We got up.” → “We were up.”

However, we have already noticed examples of verbs of motion which can also be reflexive:

“The patient sat (himself) up in bed.” → “The patient was sitting up in bed.”
“Bernard drove (himself) home.” → “Bernard was back home.”

Other examples are:

French: “Il s’approcha de moi.” “He [himself] came up to me.”
“Nous nous arrêâmes sur le bascôté.” “We [ourselves] pulled up by the roadside.”

German: “Er ist sich erhoben.” “He has [himself] got up.”

“Der Preis bewegt sich um die 50 Mark.”
“The price moved [itself] around 50 marks.”

Russian: “On podnyalsya so stula.” “He rose [himself] from [his] chair.”
“Vsya tolpa dvinulas’ vperéd.” “The whole crowd moved [itself] forward.”

Arabic: “ʔalayhim ʔan yatawājadū ʔamāma l-ʔidārati”
“They must present themselves to the administration.”
[On-them that they-find-themselves before the-administration.]

Indonesian/Malay verbs distinguishes between transitive and intransitive verbs of motion through prefixes and suffixes. “men-” and “-kan” indicate a transitive verb; “ber-” indicates an intransitive verb, and “ter-” indicates a resultant stative:

“Puan Ng membaringkan bayinya di atas katil.” “Mrs Ng laid her baby on the bed.”
[Mrs Ng lay baby-her on bed.]
“Sammy berbaring di atas sofa.” “Sammy lay on [the] sofa.”
“Sophia terbaring di tepi pantai.” “Sophia is lying on the beach.” [Sophia lie on side beach.]
“menyandarkan sesuatu pada dinding” “[to] lean something against [the] wall”
“Dia bersandar pada meja itu.” “He leant on the table.” [He leant on table-the.]
“Tangga itu tersandar pada dinding.” “The ladder was leaning against the wall.”
[Ladder-the lean against wall.]

Verbs of motion can take directives and measures like transitive locative verbs (Chapter 6., The Locative Function):

German: “Er ging ins Tal hinab.” “He went down into the valley.”
[He went into-the valley down.]

Italian: “Forse era tempo di prepararsi ad andare via.”
“Perhaps it was time to prepare to go away.”
“Tre autocarri venivano su per la carrozzabile.”
“Three vans were coming up [along] the track.”

Persian: “davan davan jelou amad” “He came forward running.”
[Running running forward came-he.]
“bar migardim” “We shall return.” [In we-shall-become.]

Chinese: “Qìchē guò qiáo lái le.” “The car has come over the bridge.”
[Car across bridge come (aorist).]
“Dàshǐ huí Lúndūn qù le.” “The ambassador has gone back to London.”
[Ambassador back London go (aorist).]
“Kèren jìn wūzi lái le.” “The guests came into the room.”
[Guest into room come (aorist).]

The Instrumental Intransitive or Reflexive Sentence

In an agential intransitive sentence, an agent intentionally performs an operation on him/herself. In an instrumental intransitive sentence, an instrument effects an action on itself. Although a human agent may have ultimate responsibility for the action, no such agent is expressed, and his/her action may or may not be remote:

“The train ran from London to Carlisle.” “The computer booted itself.”

An instrument can also be a natural phenomenon which performs an action on itself:

“The fire burnt itself out.” “The storm blew itself out.”

However, the difference between this expression and a simple inceptive such as “The lightning flashed”; “The rain fell” is slight. Instrumental intransitives therefore usually express a man-made process.

Of the transitive functions listed in Chapter 6., the examples listed above are of the location, transformation and destruction functions. The other transitive functions do not arise, for the following reasons:

- The creation function requires an agent and is therefore not instrumental.
- An instrument does not in practice alter its own constituents or dimensions, so the constituent function does not arise.
- An effect and a freedom are performed on an object which is different from the instrument. They can therefore not be an instrumental reflexive.
- An instrument does not in practice place itself at risk. The dependency and a relief functions therefore do not arise.
- The appliance function requires an agent and is therefore not instrumental.
- An identification function may apply to an inanimate object: “This train is the Royal Scot”. However, it is carried out by an agent and is therefore not instrumental.

The Inceptive Sentence

An *inceptive* sentence is one in which the subject undergoes a change to a form described by a resultant, but in which no agent is expressed or understood. The construction is “subject-verb-resultant”. The following are typical examples:

“He became angry at the news.”	→	“He was angry at the news.”
“She fell ill with jaundice.”	→	“She was ill with jaundice.”
“The box came apart.”	→	“The box was in pieces.”
“George grew 6 feet tall.”	→	“George was 6 feet tall.”
“The door opened wide.”	→	“The door was open.”
“The fire burnt to ashes.”	→	“The fire was burnt to ashes.”
“The film finished.”	→	“The film was finished.”
“The bridge collapsed.”	→	“The bridge was in pieces.”
“The tree fell across the road.”	→	“The tree was lying across the road.”
“The bones fossilised.”	→	“The bones were fossils.”
“The kettle boiled.”	→	“The water was boiled.”

The difference from an agential intransitive is that an inceptive is involuntary. While the subject may be animate or inanimate, it does not act on itself, and is therefore not reflexive.

Except in the case of an effect, illustrated in the first two sentences above, an inceptive usually does not have an instrument. “The window blew open through the wind” is usually better expressed as “the wind blew the window open”. However, as we saw in the previous chapter, not all languages make this distinction.

The resultant sentence may also be constructed with the perfective participle:

“He was angered at the news.” “The box was come apart.” “George was grown six feet tall.”
 “The bridge was collapsed in pieces.” “The tree was felled across the road.”

By this definition, the inceptive construction is similar to a passive transitive construction without an agent (Chapter 6., The Passive Construction):

“The book was written.” “The house was painted white.”

The difference is that underlying the passive sentences is the assumption that an agent performed them, even if none is expressed. All of the intransitive sentences quoted above could occur without an agent, and for some, an agent is impossible:

“George grew 6 feet tall”; “The volcano erupted”; “The rain fell”.

In Finnish, the resultant of an inceptive is marked by translative case (ending in “-kse” or “-ksi”), in the same way as the resultant of a transitive sentence (Chapter 6.):

“Isä on tullut vanhaksi” “Father has become old.” [Father is become old _(translative).]
 “Olot muuttuivat normaaleiksi.” “The conditions became normal.”
 [Conditions are-become normal _(translative)].

Referring to the functions of a transitive sentence listed in Chapter 6., we see that most may be expressed by an inceptive but some may not:

- Creation, destruction, and transformation can arise without an agent:

“The Queen was born in 1926.” “The Phoenix rises from its ashes.”
 “The plants died.” “The water dried up.”
 “Jane became ill.” “Jean became a Latin scholar.”
- The locative function can be inceptive, and can have a directive and measure:

German: “Der Wind streift die Heide entlang.” “The wind sweeps along the heath.”
 [The wind sweeps the heath along.]

Welsh: “Eith nghar ddim i fyny’r allt.” “My car won’t go up the hill.”
 [Will-go car not up the hill.]
 “Mae prisiau wedi mynd i lawr.” “Prices have gone down.”
 [Are prices after go down.]
- Constituent measures can occur without an agent:

“The water level rose by a metre.” “The apples doubled in size over the month.”
- Since an effect expresses an involuntary condition, it can be expressed as an inceptive:

“She was glad to see them.” “The furniture became covered with dust.”
- A dependency which is involuntary can be an inceptive for the same reason:

“The army became in danger of encirclement.” “The site became at risk of subsidence.”
- The appliance function refers to the deliberate application of an artefact. It therefore cannot be inceptive.
- A conversion can occur without an agent:

“George V acceded as King in 1910.” “Mary became an architect.”

In discussing agential intransitives, we saw that they are generally formed by languages in one of four ways:

- as intransitive verbs their own right, or
- unchanged from the corresponding transitive verb, or
- as a reflexive construction of a corresponding transitive verb, or
- as a variation of a transitive verb.

Inceptives employ these four constructions, plus two others:

- (i) Some inceptives exist in their own right and are not related to an agential verb, transitive or intransitive:

“George Washington was born in 1732.”

“Queen Anne died in 1714.”
 “The Thames flows into the North Sea.”
 “We slipped on the ice.”
 “He has aged since we saw him last.”
 “Man evolved from apes.”
 “They fell asleep soon after.”

- (ii) The same verb is either transitive or inceptive. The agent of the transitive is not marked, and the distinction is understood from context:

“He broke the package apart.”	“The package broke apart.”
“She opened the door wide.”	“The door opened wide.”
“He shone the torch into the room.”	“The torch shone into the room.”
“They grew vegetables in the garden.”	“Vegetables grew in the garden.”
“He burnt the logs in the grate.”	“The logs burnt in the grate.”
“She stopped the car.”	“The car stopped.”
“He boiled the water.”	“The water boiled.”

The sentences in the second column are all true inceptives, in that no agent is expressed or understood, but the verb is unchanged from the transitive. An inceptive verb may also occur where no agent is possible: “The sun shone”; “The snow fell”; “The children grew”; “The rain stopped”.

Welsh: “Mae e’n tyfu tatws.” “He grows potatoes.” [Is he in grow potatoes.]
 “Mae’r plant wedi tyfu.” “The children have grown.” [Are the children after grow.]
 “Bydd rhaid deffro’r plant.” “The children will have to be woken.”
 [Will must wake the children.]
 “Pryd dych chi’n deffro fel arfer?” “When do you usually wake up?”
 [When are you awake as usual.?)

Unlike the Greek agential intransitive which is the same as the passive transitive, the Greek inceptive is the same as the active transitive. :

“Τίποτα δεν την σταματάει.” “Nothing will stop her.” [Nothing not her stops.]
 “Το ρολόι μου σταμάτησε.” “My watch stopped.” [The watch-my stopped.]
 “Με ξύπνησε ο θόρυβος.” “The noise woke me up.” [Me woke the noise.]
 “Ξύπνησε απότομα.” “He woke up with a start.”

- (iii) The inceptive is the same as the reflexive, and therefore the agential intransitive, of the corresponding transitive verb. This is despite the fact that no agent is implied:

German: “Ich ärgerte mich über ihn.”	“I was annoyed at him.” [I annoyed myself over him.]
“Ich freue mich über seinen Erfolg.”	“I rejoice [myself] at his success.”
Spanish: “El barco se hundió.”	“The boat sunk [itself].”
“El líquido se extiende por la superficie.”	“The liquid spreads [itself] over the surface.”
“La puerta se abrió.”	“The door opened [itself].”
“Me caí en la calle.”	“I fell [myself] in the street.”
Italian: “Il carattere del vecchio gentiluomo si era ammorbidito.”	“The old gentleman’s character had softened.” [The character of-the old gentleman itself was softened.]
Russian: “Ona ostanavlivaet avtobus.”	“She stops the bus”
“Avtobus ostanavlivaetsya.”	“The bus stops [itself].”
“On zakryl za soboi dver’.”	“He shut the door behind him.”
“Yashchik zakrylsya sovsem legko.”	“[The] box shut [itself] quite easily.”

Arabic: “yaqūlūna mā yaxṭuru bi-bālihim ḥasabamā ttafaqa”
 “They say what comes into their minds just as it happens [itself].”
 “tafattaḥat ṣaynāhā” “Her eyes opened.” [Opened-themselves two-eyes-her.]
 “bi-mujarradi ṯan tatakawwana tabqā fi l-bīṯati”
 “As soon as they are formed, they remain in the environment.”
 [Immediately that they-form-themselves they-remain in the-environment.]

Similarly, the inceptive may be the same as the corresponding agential verb of motion:

“He settled in the chair.”	“The snow settled on the ground.”
“The guests came into the hall.”	“The tide came up.”
“He ran to post.”	“The car ran quite smoothly.”

(iv) The inceptive is a variation of the corresponding transitive, for example in English:

“She felled the tree across the road.”	“The tree has fallen across the road.”
“He woke his brother.”	“His brother awoke.”
“She raised the barrier.”	“The barrier rose.”

Hungarian:

“Megszüntették a rendeletet.” “They abolished the decree.”
 [Ended-they _(transitive) the decree.]
 “Megszűnt a szegénység.” “Poverty has ended.” [Ended the poverty.]
 “Mikor kezdék az előadást?” “When did they start the lecture?”
 [When started-they the lecture _{(accusative)?}]
 “Mikor kezdődött az előadás?” “When did the lecture start?”
 [When started _(inceptive) the lecture?]

Hindi: “mai~ use torū~ gā” “I shall break it.” [I it shall-break.] (“torṇā” = “break”)
 “yah chaṛī āsānī se nahī~ ṭūṭī” “This stick doesn’t break easily.”
 [This stick ease-with not breaks.] (“ṭūṭnā” = “break”)
 “usne tarkārī jālā” “He burned the curry.”
 [He curry burned.] (“jālānā” = “burn”)
 “yah lakṛī nahī~ jālī” “This wood doesn’t burn.”
 [This wood not burns.] (“jālṇā” = “burn”)

In Indonesian, it is more usual for the transitive verb to be formed from the inceptive, in this example with the suffix “-kan”:

“Polisi memikul beban ganti rugi.”
 “[The] Police bore [the] burden [of] compensation.”
 “Hakim memikulkan beban ganti rugi pada polisi.”
 “[The] judge imposed [the] burden [of] compensation on [the] police.”

Japanese relate transitives to inceptives with the same variety of “-ru”/“-su” suffixes as for agential intransitive verbs:

“enpitsu de kaita ji o kesu” “rub out letters written with a pencil”
 [pencil-with written character _(object) rub-out]
 “dentō ga kieru” “The electric light goes out.” [Electric-light _(subject) goes-out.]
 “ha o nuku” “extract a tooth” [tooth _(object) take-out]
 “ha ga nukeru” “a tooth falls out” [tooth _(subject) fall-out]
 “enjin o ugokasu” “start an engine” [engine _(object) start]
 “kikai ga ugoite iru” “The machinery is running.”
 [Machinery _(subject) running-is] (“ugoku” = “move”)

(v) Some languages possess a grammatical construction called ergative (Chapter 6., The Ergative Construction). An agent is marked, and a word which is not an agent (the object of a

transitive and the subject of an inceptive) is not marked. In this way, a single verb can perform as either transitive or intransitive.

In Inuit, the agent of a verb with a direct object is in the ergative, and is marked with the suffix “-p”, which is also used for the genitive case (“of”). The object of a verb, and subject of a verb without a direct object, are not marked. Verbs with and without a direct object also have different endings:

“Piniartup qimmiq anuaa.” “The hunter harnessed the dog.”
 [Hunter _(agent) dog harness-he-it.]
 “Piniartuq aallarpuq.” “The hunter left.” [Hunter leave-he.]

- (vi) An auxiliary inceptive verb, such as “become”, “fall”, and “grow” in English, is applied to the expected resultant, whether an attribute or an identification:

“She grew tired.” “They became doctors.” “The argument fell apart on discussion.”

All languages appear to have a word for “become” in order to construct inceptive sentences. It may be significant that many have their origin in an agential intransitive word, usually a verb of motion:

English	“come” → “become”.
French	“venir” “come” → “devenir” “become”.
German	“werden” “turn” → “werden” “become”.
Russian	“stanovit’sya” “stand” → “stanovit’sya” “become”
Finnish	“tulla” “come” → “tulla” “become”
Welsh	“dod” “come” → “dod” “become”
Persian	“šodan” “go” (obsolete) → “šodan” “become”
Hindi	“bannā” “be made” → “bannā” “become”
Malay	“jadi” “manage to” → “menjadi” “become”.

In Japanese, many transitive verbs are constructed with the auxiliary verb “suru” “do”/“make”. These verbs form an inceptive by substituting “naru” “become”. The “naru” sentence is not a passive, since no reference to an agent is intended:

“Gakkō wa Yamada o teigaku shita.” “The school suspended Yamada.”
 [School _(topic) Yamada _(object) suspension made.]
 “Yamada wa teigaku ni natta.” “Yamada was suspended from school.”
 [Yamada _(topic) suspension-in became.]

Similarly, many Hindi transitive verbs are constructed with “karnā” (“do”/“make”). These verbs often form an inceptive by substituting “honā” (“be”):

“mai~ nau baje darvāzā band kartā hū~” “I close the door at nine o’clock.”
 [I nine o’clock door closed making am.]
 “darvāzā nau baje band hotā hai” “The door closes at nine o’clock.”
 [Door nine o’clock closed been is.]

Where Hindi possesses an attributive verb, an inceptive is formed from it by means of “jānā” (“go”). The same auxiliary is used to construct the Hindi passive from the transitive (Chapter 6., The Passive Construction). In the following example, “bacnā” is “be safe” and “bacānā” is “save”/“rescue”:

“sirf ek hī ādmī bac gayā” “Only one man came to be saved.”	(inceptive)
[Only one man safe went.]	
“sirf ek hī admī bacāyā gayā” “Only one man was saved.”	(passive)
[Only one man rescued went.]	

The Participation Function

There are a large number of sentences which take a direct object in English but an indirect object, with the pre/postposition “to” or similar, in another language:

- French: “Ils jouent aux cartes.” “They are playing [at] cards.”
 “Je lui ai résisté.” “I resisted him.” [I to-him have resisted.]
- Italian: “I ragazzi hanno ubbidito al professore.” “The boys [have] obeyed [to] the teacher.”
 “Giocano a scacchi” “They are playing [at] chess.”
- Spanish: “Esto obedece a unas normas de comportamiento.”
 “This obeys [to] certain norms of behaviour.”
- German: “Er folgte mir nach draußen.” “He followed [to] me outside.”
 “Ich bin ihm heute auf der Brücke begegnet.” “I met him today on the bridge.”
 [I am to-him today on the bridge met.]
 “Er wohnte der Versammlung bei.” “He attended [to] the meeting.”
 “Er kam seiner Pflicht nach.” “He fulfilled [to] his duty.”
 “Es dient einem guten Zweck.” “It serves [to] a useful purpose.”
- Russian: “Ego protivniki napali na etu teoriyu.” “His opponents attacked [on] the theory.”
 “Ona igraet na pianino.” “She is playing [on the] piano.”
- Arabic: “ʔalayhi ʔan yafiya bi-waʔdihi” “He has to fulfil his promise.”
 [On-him that he-fulfils (subjunctive) at promise-his.]
 “hāḏīhi lā tazālu dirādatan taqūmu bihā l-dawlatu”
 “This is still a study that the state is carrying out.”
 [This is-still study performing on-it the-state.]
- Persian: “be ma taʔaddi kard” “He oppressed us.” [On us oppression he-made.]
 “bar došmanan taxtand” “They attacked the enemy.” [On enemy they-attacked.]
 “be in eʔteraz kard” “He protested at this.” [To this protest he-made.]
- Hindi: “hamne dušman par hamlā kiyā” “We attacked the enemy.”
 [By-us enemy-on attack made.]
 “maĩ unse āj hī milū̃gā” “I’ll meet them today.”
 [I them-with today only will-meet.]
 “vah mujhse nahī̃ laṛegā” “He won’t fight me.” [He me-with not will-fight.]
- Japanese:
 “Boku wa kinō Tanaka-san ni atta.” “I met Mr Tanaka yesterday.”
 [I (topic) yesterday Tanaka-Mr-to met.]
 “Ichirō wa Midori to kekkonshita.” “Ichiro married Midori.”
 [Ichiro (topic) Midori-with married.]

The common characteristic of these verbs is that they describe an activity towards an external object, but do not alter it. The actions of following, obeying, meeting, resisting, attacking, fulfilling, etc make no change in that which is followed, obeyed, resisted, fulfilled etc, or if they do, none is indicated by the sentence. As the above examples show, languages generally show a lack of clarity as to whether these verbs take a direct or indirect object. Moreover, even in English their direct/indirect object structure is ambiguous. Synonyms or near-synonyms of the same verbs take a preposition:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| “She met her friend.” | “She met with her friend.” |
| “We attended the meeting.” | “We came to the meeting.” |
| “They attacked the enemy.” | “They waged war on the enemy.” |
| “He obeyed the rules.” | “He conformed to the rules.” |
| “She opposed the idea.” | “She spoke against the idea.” |
| “We resisted the proposal.” | “We fought against the proposal.” |
| “She tackled the problem.” | “She dealt with the problem.” |
| “I processed the batch.” | “I worked on the batch.” |

“adgredi navem” “to attack-oneself the ship” (Caesar)

Greek: “Θα αντισταθούμε στη βία.” “We shall resist the violence.”

[Shall we-resist-ourselves to the violence.]

“Επιτέθηκαν στην πρωτεύουσα.” “They attacked the capital.”

[They-attacked-themselves to the capital.]

“Ο επιθεωρητής επισκέφθηκε το σχολείο μας χθες.”

“The inspector visited our school yesterday.”

[The inspector visited-himself the school-our yesterday.]

Also included among participation verbs are various activities for which English uses an auxiliary verb, noun or adjective, and proposition:

“get round to”, “put up with”, “come to terms with”, “not stand for”, “bring oneself to”, “do justice to”, “make it one’s business to”, “take in hand”, “get the better of”, “get away with”.

Participation functions may be expressed by an auxiliary participation verb and a noun expressing an participation activity, called a *role* (Chapter 12., Role):

“She visited the school as an inspector.”

“He worked in Venice as British consul.”

“She attended the bedside as his nurse.”

Participation sentences which connect the verb directly with the target show a superficial similarity with a transitive verb. In particular, they often form a participle to describe the target: “obeyed”, “followed”, “attacked”, “resisted”, “encountered”, “tackled”, “attended”, “defied”, “fulfilled”, “played”, “served”, “visited”, “managed”, “met”, etc. English also forms a participle for the target when a preposition occurs between the verb and the target, although not all languages do so: “cared for”, “complied with”, “coped with”, “worked on”, “rebelled against”, “referred to”, etc. These participles may be used as qualifiers or predicates, and the following sentences therefore occur. The ones with * are apparently incorrect; those with ? are dubious (at least to the present writer):

“Her friend was met by her.”

?“Her friend was met with by her.”

“The meeting was attended by us.”

*“The meeting was come to by us.”

“The enemy was attacked by us.”

*“The enemy was waged war on by us.”

“The rules were obeyed by him.”

“The rules were conformed to by him.”

“The idea was opposed by her.”

?“The idea was spoken against by her.”

“The proposal was resisted by us.”

“The proposal was fought against by us.”

“The problem was tackled by her.”

“The problem was dealt with by her.”

“The batch was processed by me.”

“The batch was worked on by me.”

“Mr Jones is being sought by us.”

?“Mr Jones is being searched for by us.”

“Her neighbour was visited by her.”

“Her neighbour was called on by her.”

Unlike a passive sentence, these sentences do not describe an action on something or someone, but the function of a target with respect to a participation. We suggest the term *target sentence*. Similarly, the term “perfective participle” is unsuitable for the function of a target since no action on it is described, and we suggest the term *target participle*. The terminology of a participation sentence is discussed further in Chapter 15.

Since the function of a participation agent is clearly defined, then imperfective and (often) general participles occur as with other agential verbs: “obeying”, “obedient”; “attacking”, “aggressive”; “resisting”, “resistant”, etc.

As mentioned in Chapter 5., not all languages possess a perfective participle. Those that do so usually also permit a target participle. Most such languages do not permit a target sentence if the target is not connected directly to the verb:

German: “I was followed” is “Mir wurde gefolgt” [To-me was followed], not

*“Ich wurde gefolgt.”

Italian: “The teacher was obeyed by the boys” is “Al professore hanno ubbidito i ragazzi”
[To-the professor obeyed the boys], not *“Il professore è stato ubbidito dai ragazzi.”

A target sentence can sometimes be expressed by the auxiliary verb “undergo” (or its equivalent), attached to a verbal noun expressing the participation action:

“They underwent attack.” “She underwent treatment.”

Indonesian/Malay possesses two suffixes which form verbs: “-i”, which indicates that it does not alter its object and is a participation, and “-kan”, which generally indicates that it is transitive. Both suffixes can be attached to the same base word with the prefix “men-”, which causes phonetic changes. The following contrast participation and transitive sentences formed from the same base word (in brackets):

“Pegarah itu bersetuju untuk menemui wartawan-wartawan tersebut.”
“The director agreed to meet the reporters.” [Director-the agree to meet reporters-the.]
“Persidangan itu telah mempertemukan pakar-pakar perubatan.”
“The conference brought together medical specialists.”
[Conference-the did bring-together specialist medical.] (“temu” = “meeting”)
“Pei Ling ingin menyertai kelab renang.”
“Pei Ling would like to join the swimming club.” [Pei Ling want join club swimming.]
“Elizabeth menyertakan sekeping gambar bersama suratnya.”
“Elizabeth enclosed a photo with her letter.”
[Elizabeth enclose one-unit photo with letter-her.] (“serta” = “with”)
“Mandy memenuhi semua keperluan kerja itu.”
“Mandy fulfilled all the requirements for the job.” [Mandy fulfil all necessity job-the.]
“Ani memenuhkan cawannya dengan kopi.” “Ani filled her cup with coffee.”
[Ani fill cup-her with coffee.] (“penuh” = “full”)

The base word with a preposition is often equivalent to a verb constructed with “men-...-i”:

“Mereka hadir di rapat itu.” [They present at meeting-the.]
“Mereka menghadiri rapat itu.” [They attend meeting-the.]

It should be pointed out that a participation sentence is not the only construction in which a verb takes a direct or indirect object without altering or affecting it:

“He became bored with the lecture.”
“They risked falling into the sea.”
“She heard the noise of the explosion.”
“We considered the complaint seriously.”

None of these four sentences are an action directed towards an external target, which is the characteristic of an participation. In terms of the previous sections of this chapter, the first sentence is an effect inceptive, in which an involuntary state is caused by an external object. The second is a dependency agential intransitive, in which the subjects place themselves in danger of a future event. In the third sentence, the subject is an involuntary recipient of an object. In the fourth, the subjects engage in a voluntary mental process towards the object. The third and fourth sentences are discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Transitive and intransitive sentences have a core function in which an action occurs on an object (or patient), which for an intransitive sentence is also the subject, so that it changes to a new state or condition. Each sentence has a resultant which describes the state or condition of the object, and which can be expressed by a resultant stative sentence. The core elements of these sentences are therefore the verb and object and any agent or instrument effecting the action. In addition, the resultant state or condition may also refer to other elements: the location, measure, base, dependency, burden, appliance, or participant.

We have classified both transitive and intransitive sentences into about seven types, distinguished by the action that each performs on its object and the resultant state that the object is in. These seven types are further refined to 12 sentence types when they are considered further in Chapter 15. They are the same for both transitive and intransitive sentences, and it appears from this that the distinction between transitive, intransitive, and passive is not a function of a sentence but its role in discourse: whether the agent, instrument, or object is the topic, and whether the agent or instrument is the same as the object. As we have already mentioned, Chapters 13. and 14. attempt to analyse and classify sentences by their discourse type.

This classification of a sentence by the nature of its action or state is defined by the elements which are required to complete the sentence's meaning. We shall show in Chapters 14. and 15. that such a classification is independent of the role of the sentence in discourse and therefore of the distinction between transitive, intransitive, and passive, and indeed of the distinction between a statement and a question.

In Chapters 8. and 9. we proceed to consider a different type of sentence, one which alters the relationship between an object and another core entity, a recipient. Although such sentences have been traditionally classified as transitive or intransitive, their functional character is in fact different, and is determined by the nature of the relationship of the object with the recipient.