

## Practice Unit 5

- Most of our standard grammatical terminology - for examples terms such as *subject*, *gerund*, *conjunction* - was first developed in the analysis of Latin and then transferred to the description of other languages, which of course created the occasional problem of "fit". Look up the definition of the category *preposition* in two current reference grammars of English, namely Greenbaum/Quirk's 1990 *Student's grammar of the English language* and Huddleston/Pullum's 2005 *Student's introduction to English grammar*. What differences do you note, and what are the results of these differences for the description of English grammar? Which definition would you prefer for a foreign-language teaching and learning context?

- Has English got a possessive pronoun? Consider the following evidence:

*I didn't get this book from George but from **his** friend.*

*It seems George has no friends **of his own**.*

*I didn't get this book from George but from a friend of **his**.*

*If you want the recorder you must ask George. It's **his**.*

*Sally left **her** car in the garage.*

*I have my passport on me but Sally left **hers** in her hotel-room.*

- Check three reference grammars of your choice to find out whether they make use of the part-of-speech category *determiner*. If they do, find out what precisely is subsumed under this category in each case. Is there agreement between your sources?
- Indicate which constructional patterns the verbs listed occur in. Do not rely on your intuition only but also use reference works such as monolingual learners' dictionaries. Make notes of rare, idiomatic or otherwise restricted usages such as *the cat wants out* or *I had me a good time*, which might be difficult to analyse in the given framework:

	SP	SPO	SPCs	SPA	SPOO	SPOCo	SPOA
Be							
Have							

Do							
Get							
Want							
Come							
Go							
Give							
Take							
Make							
Put							
Keep							

5. All of the following sentences are structurally ambiguous. Paraphrase the alternative meanings in each case and assign the correct grammatical analysis to each.

*I found this book about the women's question in Ireland.*

*Visiting relatives can be a nuisance.*

*You can meet all sorts of people hanging around here.*

6. Which of the structures in bold italics are subject clauses?

***Whether we will get our money back*** is still in doubt.

***Almost everything that he has said in his defence*** is completely unconvincing.

***What you need*** is a good rest.

***Old people living alone and dying of hypothermia*** is a bloody shame.

***Old people living alone*** are the group most at risk.

***To give up now*** would be to accept defeat.

It is heartening ***that so many people have agreed to help***.

7. Analyse the syntactic function of the constituent(s) in bold italics and argue for your analysis.

*She used to make a living **giving English lessons**.*

*I'm looking for a book **to consult on weak-stress forms in English**.*

*We're all waiting **for the crew to open the door**.*

***Coming home**, we found the kids **playing in front of the running television**.*

*This won't prevent you **falling asleep in his classes**.*

*...several measures that **failed to** keep the system running...*

*Who would want **there** to be another war.*

*That was the **wrong** solution to advocate.*

8. Compare the following English and German sentences and comment on causes of the ungrammaticality of \* *I have read*.

I have been reading.

Ich habe gelesen.

\* I have read.

Ich habe gelesen.

I have read several books on the subject.

Ich habe mehrere Bücher zum Thema gelesen.

9. The following two sentences illustrate a surface sequence of NP + VP + NP + VP (infinitive) + NP:

*They persuaded the parents to sell their house.*

*They wanted the parents to sell their house.*

Test which passives are possible in each case and interpret the results in terms of what they indicate about the grammatical function of the noun phrase *the parents* in either case.