# TOWARDS THE VERB GRAMMAR

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The problem to bring out a grammar complete in all respects was from the. time language came into existence, as a result several theories and grammars emerged in east and west as well. We can refer to the grammars written in India by the names as Kātantra, Śākaṭāyana, Jainendra, Mugdhabodha, Cāndra, Sārasvata, Pāṇinian and to the western grammars as Traditional, Descriptive, Structural, Generative, Case, Stratificational, Lexical Functional, Generalised Phrase Structure and Communicative etc. Now why do we need a new grammar? It is a very general but fundamental question - the present paper attempts to answer this question and also to the question - what could be the proper frame for such a grammar?

The grammars which are written in India are for individual languages but it is not the meaning that they do not have any reference or source material for Universal Grammar which we discuss these days. When we attentively view Indian Grammars, we find several concepts, which are defined there, quite proper for the frame of Universal Grammar.

The structuralists emphasize on the process of segmenting and classifying the physical features of utterances with little reference to the abstract underlying structures of language or their meaning. In other words, they begin to think that the meaning is beyond the physical nature of' language. So, no place may be given to meaning in the analysis of language (Bloomfield, 1980). Generativists specially Chomsky and Harris attacked on this approach of structuralists and advocated for a grammar which could be capable of seeing the structure with meaning (Crystal, 1985, p. 290). They (Generativists) also paid their attention towards the universal nature of language and began to formulate such a grammar which could be applicable on all the languages of world or may be language-universal. Thus shifting from structural to universal grammar, grammarians propagated different grammatical theories viz. Transformational Generative Grammar and Case Grammar etc. Case grammarians concentrated on case relations and that is why they name their grammar as Case Grammar (Jain, 1986).

Language has such an intricacy where several models focused in their respective frames but ultimately failed in, it is because the existing grammars whether that may be structural or transformational, may be case or stratificational, may be lexical functional or generalised

phrase structure, tried to view language intricacy through a particular feature of language, that is why they emphasized on a particular aspect of language in their respective grammars. There is another point that what these theories conceptually hold, could not maintain in their own works, it means: theories contradict in themselves. As Fillmore talks the centrality of syntax in verb but Case Grammar has been unable to establish the verb at central, it was the cause that verb is not shown at central in his tree-structured diagram which represents his underlying structure (Jain, 1986).
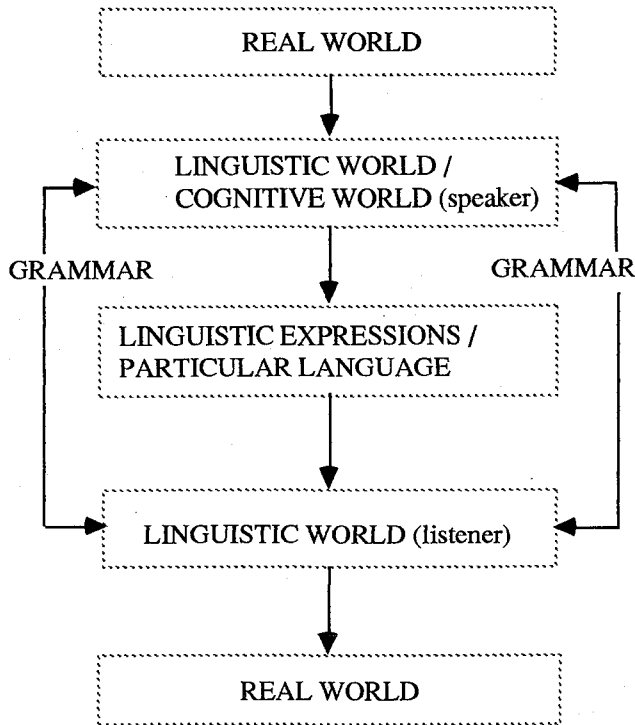
Now the same question, which was from the very ancient times, comes up: how we may deal with this language intricacy, besides we may continuely keep in our minds that the totality of language may not be distorted or segmented.

In the last few years the concepts of discourse and texts which are broader than sentence emerged in linguistics. But sentence had been the focal point in the several theories in east and west as well. Now there is a critical position with reference to the intricacy of the totality of language whether we may attempt to uphold this intricacy through text or discourse or sentence. If we look attentively, we find that the concepts of text and discourse are more semantic in nature. They have structure but their structurality is functioning on the basis of meaning in one side, the other side on sentences also. That is why sentence is more pertinent in comparison to discourse and text, but it never has the meaning that sentence ever neglects meaning, it always keeps meaning in but it can be sorted out from innumerable linguistic data on the basis of its structure.

There is another important issue: how this language or sentence is processed in human mind. If we are able to learn this process, we shall be able to handle the intricacy of language very easily and also to such other related questions. But the cognitive process of human mind is physically un-observable in nature. Linguistic world is the part of this cognitive structure of mind. Grammar starts from this world. The aim of grammar is not to analyse real world as Fillmore has done in defining certain case categories, that is why he has taken animacy into account while deciding the nature of agent. Animacy is not the part of cognitive world, it is the part of real world. Language is not exactly what the real world is. It has its own world which can be termed as "Linguistic World". Linguistic world represents real world but it is not exactly as real world, it is always mental. Grammar is related to this linguistic world having the following major roles:

1. To analyse this linguistic world
2. To express this world as per needs
3. To express the relationship between the expressions and linguistic world.

We can see linguistic world, linguistic expressions and the area of grammar in the following way:

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           ....................................................
           :              REAL WORLD                  :
           :..................................................:
                              |
                              ▼
           ....................................................
     ┌───▶  :          LINGUISTIC WORLD /               :  ◀───┐
     │     :          COGNITIVE WORLD (speaker)        :       │
     │     :..................................................:       │
     │                                                         │
  GRAMMAR                        |                    GRAMMAR  │
     │                           ▼                             │
     │     ....................................................       │
     │     :     LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS /            :       │
     │     :     PARTICULAR LANGUAGE                 :       │
     │     :..................................................:       │
     │                           |                             │
     │                           ▼                             │
     │     ....................................................       │
     └───▶ :    LINGUISTIC WORLD (listener)         :  ◀───┘
           :..................................................:
                              |
                              ▼
           ....................................................
           :              REAL WORLD                  :
           :..................................................:
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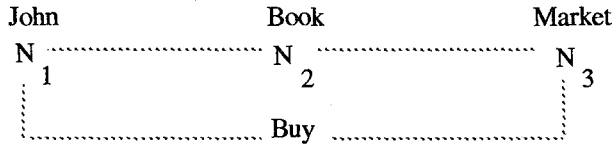
This linguistic world partially depends upon real world and partially upon linguistic expressions. (The nature of linguistic world will be discussed in a different shortly coming paper.)

Chomsky discussed three types of grammar viz. 1.Universal Grammar, 2. Core Grammar; 3. Peripheral Grammar. In fact peripheral grammar is not that kind of grammar as Universal or Core Grammar is, it is because it deals with exceptions which can not be covered up by core grammar of language. Although it can be the part of all languages yet it differs from one language to another. Peripheral grammar does not have that identitiy as universal or core grammar has. So we should talk of a single entity i.e. Grammar. Language Specific Grammar which deals with the exceptions of particular languages or characteristics of individual languages, is complementary to it. While analysing the language we find two types of rules viz.: 1. the rules which are the part of every language (every language has a sentence) are Universal Rules; 2. the rules which are with reference to the characteristics of a particular language and can not be seen in terms of Universal Rules in any way, these rules distinguish and vary from one language to another, are Language Specific Rules. In short my humble submission is that there is no need of introducing new terms like Core and Peripheral Grammar which Chomsky proposed (Chomsky, 1982).

Our previous problem: how sentence is processed, is still unsolved. Chomsky finds NP and VP as basic elements of sentence (Cook, 1988) while Fillmore to Modality and Proposition (Fillmore, 1968). There is another issue whether verb is primary in sentence or there is the primacy of nominals over verb. This issue is somehow discussed by all the grammarians. We can see a long debate on this issue of primacy of verb over nominals and vice-versa in a long Indian Scholarly Tradition of Naiyāyikas, Mīmāmsakas and Vaiyākaraṇas. Naiyāyikas discuss the primacy of nominative in sentence, they argue that only nominative is free in a sentence and take help of Pāṇini's definition of *kartā* (agent) in establishing this view so in their opinion all other words of sentence are subordinate to it (V.S.Rao, 1969, p.19) Such an argumentation is also seen in Western Grammatical Thought particularly in the discussions of Chomsky and Chafe (Chafe, 1970). Although Chomsky described the centrality of NPs, yet there is an independent evidence with reference to the centrality of verb: discussions related to the definiteness of syntactic relations with the verb as locus etc.When we talk of the relations e.g. subject of ... , object of ... the verb is constant, it is the noun which comes in different positions in sentence, sometimes assigns himself as subject and sometimes as object on the basis of relation to the verb.

The verb is the primary element of the sentence and links the different constituents with each other. In the absence of verb the remaining constituents of the sentence can not be linked up e.g.

S = John bought the book froml the market.

John                    Book                    Market
N ···················· N ···················· N
   1                       2                       3

       ··························· Buy ···························

It is the verb "buy" which links these nouns into a particular relatioship with each other. "The Verb . . . . . . which is something to be attained (*sādhya*) supplies the relation" (V.S. Rao, 1969).

Some scholar are of the opinion that verbs are actions. Actually verbs are not actions because actions happen in real world and real world does not come in the limit of grammar as discussed earlier. The universe survives because of the activity/ies of actions. The verbs represent these actions in linguistic world. If these actions die, universe will die. Thus the activity of actions keep the people and the universe alive. These actions are eternal so the verbs are eternal but they appear in a sequence through the various moments of verbs or individual verbs in sentence.

The verb is the root cause of the activity of all the instruments. It is eternal and root potential because it is the basis of all the cases. It

brings them in a stream. Because of being eternal it is not generated by some other source or other cases. In fact it is the first cause and instrument which brings other cases in stream (*prakṛtiḥ sādhanānāṃ sā prathamaṃ tac ca kārakam. vyāpārāṇām tato 'nyatvam aparair upavarṇyate.*). So all the case relations depend upon verb, the main theme is that neglecting verb case-relations can not exist. In fact cases are relations centering to verb, that is why they accomplish the verb. Bhoja has expained case as an instrument of verb (*kriyānimittaṃ kārakam. Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa,* 1.1.32). Hemacandra in his *Śabdā-nuśāsana* has also raised this issue in the similar way (Haim., 2/2/1). Emphasizing the importance of verb Patañjali narrates that cases are only upto that moment the verb is to be accomplished, when the verb is accomplished, the roles of cases are already over (*yāvad brūyāt kriyāyām iti tāvat kāraka iti. Mahābhasya,* 1.4.23. *kārakaśabdo hi kriyāparaḥ. Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra,* p.131). Adjectives also qualify pronouns and nouns which always remain linked with verb. Prepositions, adverbs qualify the activity of verb, that is why they also depend upon verb (Suryanarayana Sinha, 1973, p.110-112). Besides time also needs verb to be expressed. Although tense is the property of sentence, yet it can not be expressed without verb. In fact every action expresses a part of the continuum of time, verb is the representation of action, so tense is directly related to verb and then indirectly becomes the property of sentence. Whether there may be the be-verb or may be do verb, tenses can not be expressed without verb. That is why tenses primarily reside in verb (*kriyābhedāya kālas tu saṅkhyā sarvasya bhediketi. Vākyapadīya* 1.7; *nāntareṇa kriyāṃ bhūtabhaviṣyadvarta-mānāḥ kālā vyajyante. astyādibhiś ca bhūtabhaviṣyadvartamānakālā vyajyante iti. Mahābhāṣyam, bhūvādayaḥ dhātavaḥ*).

Every sentence has a final verb. Final verb mainly represents final / finite action. In the accomplishment of this final action several sub-performing actions also happen, but sentence is considered complete only then, when the final verb is accomplished. That is why Śākatāyana in his grammar propounds that sentence is only there where there is a tiṇ verb. If there is no verb, there is no sentence. Malayagiri also holds the similar view by stating that in performance of sentence verb is main, other constituents are for the verb, owing to this saviśeṣaṇam is used as an adjective (*saviśeṣaṇam ākhyātaṃ vākyam. Malayagiriśabdānuśāsana,* Second Edition 711). The concept of simple, complex and compound sentence also depends upon verb. Meaning is a very important constituent of language. Although every word gives its own general meaning, yet its specific role and meaning is actualized while the verb is accomplished. Thus the meaning of words of sentence and also of sentence itself rests on the actualization of verb.

The verb is thus the primary element of sentence or is the focal point of sentence around which whole sentence evolves. The remaining structure of sentence is either implicit in verb or is marked therein.

We have the following grounds to establish verb at the centre of a sentence:

1. it is always present in sentence, may be physically or mentally,
2. tenses directly reside in it and then in sentence,
3. the actualization of the meaning of words and of sentence also rests on the actualization of verb,
4. it determines the number of co-occurring nominals,
5. it also determines the number and nature of subsidiary concepts of sentence (adjectives etc.)
6. it also determines the nature of adverbial modifications, temporal and spatial
7. it also determines case-relations
8. it also determines the concepts of different sentence-types.

Some of the above issues regarding the primacy of verb are quite properly discussed by Kapil Kapoor in his work "The Semantic Structure and The Verb" but he has simply seen semantic aspect in verb while it has its semantico-syntactic value. Jesperson very rightly remarks: "There is certainly much truth in the name given to a verb by Chinese Grammarians 'Living Word' as opposed to a noun which is lifeless" (Jesperson, 1924, p.115).

Root (*dhātu*) is the base of verb so there comes an another question why we don't accept root as the central point of sentence. In fact root is the meaning of verb or is based on semantics. This point is clearly explained in Malayagiri (*kriyārtho dhātuḥ*). The *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇa* also holds the similar view (*tatrākhyatapadena dhātur ucyate, ākhyāyate sarvapradhānabhūto 'rtho anena vyutpatteḥ. Vai. Bhū. Sā.*, p.103). Verb is primarily syntactic but it gets the semantic energy from root and becomes semantico-syntactic. If it does not get the semantic energy from root, it will remain only structural. Structure is of no use if it does not communicate meaning. Thus root semantically performs verb (*kriyābhāvo dhātuḥ. Kātantra,* ti.-16: *yaḥ śabdaḥ kriyāṃ bhāvayati sampādayati sa dhātusañjño bhavati*).

Practically speaking root and verb both depend upon each other. Root is structurally dependent on verb while verb is semantically on root, so they can not be separated from each-other. Finally it can be stated that verb is the terminal point and it gets the energy of meaning from root (*dhātvarthtvaṃ kriyātvañ ced dhātutvam ca kriyārthatā. anyonyāśrayaḥ spaṣṭas tasmād astu yathākaram. Vai. Bhū. Sā.*, p.113). Thus it is proposed that the verb is the basic structure of grammar, so we should bring out a grammar keeping verb at central.

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