



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

Corso di Laurea magistrale (*ordinamento  
ex D.M. 270/2004*)  
in Lingue e scienze del linguaggio

Tesi di Laurea

—  
Ca' Foscari  
Dorsoduro 3246  
30123 Venezia

# LINGUISTICS 1 AT HOGWARTS

## A COMPARATIVE GRAMMAR ON THE BASIS OF HARRY POTTER'S SAGA

### **Relatrice**

Ch. ma Prof.ssa Giuliana Giusti

### **Correlatrice**

Ch.ma Prof.ssa Anna Cardinaletti

### **Laureanda**

Laura Zangrando

Matricola 802271

### **Anno Accademico**

**2013/2014**

## **INDEX**

SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS	p. V
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>p. VI</b>
0.0 Principles and Parameters	p. VI
0.1 L1 and L2: linguistic attrition in the translation	p. VII
0.2 Aim of this work and methodology	p. IX
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>Unmarked and marked word order in English and Italian</b>	<b>p.1</b>
1.0 Introduction	p.1
1.1 Word-composition process	p.1
1.2 Unmarked word order	p.6
1.3 Marked word order	p.9
1.4 Conclusions	p.13
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>The position of the subject</b>	<b>p.14</b>
2.0 Introduction	p.14
2.1 Pre-verbal VS post-verbal subject	p.14
2.2 Post-verbal subject in English	p.20
2.2.1 Locative inversion	p.20
2.2.2 Existential constructions	p.21
2.2.3 Quotative constructions	p.22
2.3 A particular case of zero subject in English	p.24
2.4 Conclusions	p.25

## **CHAPTER THREE**

<b>The verb phrase</b>	<b>p.27</b>
3.0 Introduction	p.27
3.1 Lexical verbs	p.27
3.1.1 Transitive verbs	p.27
3.1.2 Reflexive verbs	p.30
3.1.3 Verbs selecting complement clauses	p.32
3.1.3.1 Finite complement clauses	p.33
3.1.3.2 Non finite complement clauses	p.35
3.1.4 Intransitive verbs	p.38
3.1.4.1 Unaccusative verbs	p.40
3.1.5 Phrasal verbs	p.41
3.1.6 Weather verbs	p.43
3.2 Functional verbs	p.45
3.2.1 Modal verbs	p.45
3.2.2 Causative verbs	p.47
3.2.3 Perception verbs	p.48
3.2.4 Motion verbs	p.49
3.5 Conclusions	p.52

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

<b>The noun phrase and its constituents</b>	<b>p.53</b>
4.0 Introduction	p.53
4.1 The noun as the head of the NP	p.53
4.1.1 Compound nouns	p.53
4.1.2 Countable and uncountable nouns	p.55
4.1.3 Event nouns	p.57
4.2 Word order within the noun phrase: Determiners	p.59
4.2.1 Articles	p.60
4.2.2.1 Definite article	p.60
4.2.2.2 Zero article	p.63
4.2.2.3 Indefinite article	p.65

4.2.2 Quantifiers	p.66
4.2.3 Demonstratives	p.68
4.2.4 Possessives	p.69
4.3 The position of the adjectives: a comparative analysis between English and Italian	p. 73
4.4 Particular cases of post-nominal adjectives in English: small clauses and pronominal quantifiers	p.78
4.5 Conclusions	p.79

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Parataxis vs. hypotaxis p.81**

5.0 Introduction	p.81
5.1 Main and subordinate clauses: a quantitative and qualitative analysis	p.81
5.2 “That” in restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses	p.84
5.3 Short relative clauses	p.86
5.4 Self-antecedent relative clause	p.87
5.5 Conclusions	p.87
General conclusions	p.89
Bibliography	p.92

## SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

### Symbols

- \* Ungrammaticality
- ? Unnatural sentence

### Abbreviations

- NP Noun Phrase
- O Object
- Pro Pronoun
- S Subject
- V Verb

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **0.0 Principles and Parameters**

The faculty of language is the characteristic which distinguishes human beings from all the other existing species in the world, because it is the only means of communication that allows individuals to express abstract concepts. The acquisition of speaking and understanding one or more languages happens unconsciously and in a relatively short time, if it takes place very early in life and through exposure to rather poor and incomplete stimuli. This process, usually starts from birth, and reaches its climax when the child is three years old. During this lapse of time, called “critical period”, the child learns all the languages she/he is exposed to in a natural way, by virtue of simple exposure, without resorting to explicit education. Consequently, this shows that the faculty of language is an innate quality. In support of this statement, the well-known linguist, Noam Chomsky has supposed that each individual is born with an innate language acquisition mechanism called LAD (Language Acquisition Device), which allows the child to acquire all the languages she/he is exposed to. Moreover, this device allows him/her to acquire the rules and main property of the languages, thus creating a sort of implicit mental grammar, named “Universal Grammar”. This word derives from the fact that despite the great difference existing between all human languages, they share some properties in common, called “universal principles”. They are rules which do not have to be acquired, since they are fixed, predetermined and can not be violated. For instance, the Enhanced Projection Principle establishes that all sentences must have a subject. This principle is associated with the pro-drop parameter that regulates the omission of the subject. In this regard, some differences between the languages will be noted; for instance it is possible to find null subject in Italian, that is implicit, not expressed. This phenomenon, known as zero subject is typical of the Italian language, while English does not allow for the omission of the subject because the presence of this element is always required. Consequently, this rule is not universal but

language-specific. A further example of principle establishes how the constituents of a sentence have to combine with each other to form a bigger syntactic unit, named phrases. For instance, the verb phrase is composed of the verb and its direct objects. As regard the order they occur within the sentences, the languages will show some differences, since English and Italian are characterised by a S+V+O order, while German and Latin show S+O+V. Consequently also in this case the different word order represents a property that is strictly related to the language, therefore this means that parameters have to be acquired by people, to be able to understand the main structural differences existing among the languages.

### **0.1 L1 and L2: linguistic attrition in the translation**

As seen in the previous paragraph, a child can learn a language unconsciously if the exposition takes place very early in life. After this period, the acquisition of new languages is still possible, but the passing of time makes it more difficult. However, despite the major difficulty, the individual may be able to develop a very deep knowledge of the foreign language she/he is exposed to. As a result, she/he will acquire an advanced linguistic competence, almost equal to that of a native speaker. However, sometimes the presence of two languages in a speaker's mind may give rise to a sort of contact between them, consequently the individual tends to apply the syntactic structure of the foreign language to his or her native one. This phenomenon, called linguistic attrition is usually the object of study of psycholinguistics.

Translation can be considered as a special area in which this type of attrition takes place. This is the perspective taken in two volumes (Cardinaletti and Garzone 2004, Garzone and Cardinaletti 2005), which publish the results of a research project on the linguistics of translation. This topic will be discussed again in this work. In this regard, I have carried out a comparative analysis between the original English version of Harry Potter's saga, written by J.K. Rowling, and its Italian translation, written by Marina Astrologo. By comparing the two versions, I have noticed some examples of attrition, as the following passages confirm:

- (1) a. A man appeared on the corner the cat had been watching. (PhS,12)  
b. Un uomo apparve all'angolo della strada che il gatto aveva tenuto d'occhio  
(PF,12)

The comparison highlights a similarity between the two languages, because both of them show the subject in the pre-verbal position. This does not give rise to an ungrammatical sentence in (1b) since it has sense all the same, however its style is redundant, because the subject should have been placed at the end of the sentence. Moreover, it should have been placed in the post-verbal position since it represents a new element in the discourse, never mentioned before. In this case the sentence would sound better:

- (1) c. All'angolo della strada che il gatto aveva tenuto d'occhio apparve un uomo.  
(OK)

Consequently, (1b) represents an example of linguistic attrition; the translator seems to be influenced by English, which requires the subject to be always pre-verbal. As a result she has applied this rule to her native language, thus giving rise to an unnatural sentence. The syntactic interference between English and Italian has been also noticed in presence of adjectives:

- (2) a. He bent his great, shaggy head over Harry. (PhS,17)  
b. Chinò la grossa e ispida testa su Harry. (PF,12)

Both languages show the adjectives before the noun, however this position is not appropriate in (2b) because it makes the sentence unnatural, since the adjectives are usually found after the noun in Italian. Consequently the translator should have placed them in a post-nominal position:

- (2) c. Chinò la testa grossa e ispida su Harry.



In this case the sentence would have been more natural, therefore (2b) represents a further example of attrition. The comparison between the sentences has highlighted that the two languages show a syntactic structure which is totally different. For this reason I have decided to carry out the comparative analysis, whose further aims will be described in the next paragraph.

## **0.2 Aim of this work and methodology**

This work provides a comparative analysis in order to make individuals aware of the main structural property of English and Italian. For this reason I have focused my attention on the first two volumes of Harry Potter's saga in its original version, written by Joanne K. Rowling, "Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone" ("The vanishing glass", chap.2, vol.1) and "Harry Potter and the chamber of the secrets" ("Dobby's warning", chap.2, vol.2) translated into Italian by Marina Astrologo, "Harry Potter e la pietra filosofale" ("Vetri che scompaiono", cap.2, vol.1) and "Harry Potter e la camera dei segreti" ("L'avvertimento di Dobby", cap.2, vol.2).

I have chosen this linguistic corpus for my thesis because Harry Potter's saga is very famous among young people. Consequently it is more fun for them to study the syntactic properties of English and Italian. For this reason I will use the chapters mentioned above as a corpus of data for a quantitative and qualitative analysis, to highlight differences and similarities in the two languages as well as to spot some issues of attrition in the Italian translation, with reference to the subject and adjectives position within the noun phrase. Moreover, I will verify some postulates referred to English, considered a paratactic language, based on coordination and characterised by a very rigid order. In this respect, it is known that the subject is always pre-verbal. This rigidity is also mirrored in the adjectives position, since they are always found before the noun. The actual veracity of these biases, known and commonly accepted, will be verified by the comparative analysis, has been firstly represented by graphs, then I have analysed some passages taken from the chapters previously mentioned. Afterwards, I have decided to extend my analysis to find further examples of attrition, as well as to focus the attention on the verb phrase, since it triggers the post-verbal position of the subject in Italian, if it represents a new element in the discourse. For this

reason, I have examined some chapters taken from the first and the second volume, like “The boy who lived”, chap.1, Vol.1 (“Il bambino sopravvissuto”, cap.1, Vol.1), “Mudblood and murmurs”, chap.6, Vol.2 (“Mezzosangue e mezze voci”, cap.6, Vol.2) and “The deathday’s party, chap. 7, Vol.2 (“La festa di Complemorte”, cap.7, Vol.2). All the topics I have mentioned before have been discussed in five sections; the first one will illustrate the word-composition process. In this respect the analysis will highlight that Italian shows a particular kind of suffix, named modifying suffix which does not exist at all in English. The attention will be focused on word-order; in this regard, one may notice that despite the well-known rigidity of English, there may be exceptions to strict rules, because this language may show a non canonical order, albeit in very limited cases. The subsequent chapter will analyse and compare the position of the subject; in this regard the analysis will point out a stark contrast between the two languages, because English, does not allow for the post-verbal position of the subject, as well as its omission., while in Italian both phenomena are permitted. However, the analysis will reveal some particular cases where even English may show the subject in a position that is different from the canonical one. This shift is typical of some syntactic constructions, but is also strictly linked to the verb, a topic discussed in the third chapter. In this respect, the comparative analysis will point out that there is not always a perfect correspondence between the two languages, because a verb may be transitive in English and intransitive in Italian, and vice-versa. A further difference is represented by verbs selecting a clause as a direct object. In this respect, not all English verbs may select an infinitival complement clause, while Italian shows both finite and non finite complement clauses, although in some cases the opposite situation occurs. Another peculiarity of Italian is represented by the marking case of the object, a function performed by the clitic pronoun, that does not exist at all in English. This element may be included in the infinitival verb, but it can also be found before causative, perception and motion verbs.

The fourth chapter will illustrate the distribution of constituents within the noun phrase (articles, quantifiers, demonstratives), with particular reference to the position of possessives and adjectives. In this regard, the analysis seems to

confirm the English great rigidity, since both possessives and adjectives always occupy the same position, that is before the noun. However, the comparison will reveal some particular cases where English may show post-nominal adjectives, thus giving rise to a perfect parallelism with Italian.

Finally, the fifth and last section, will compare the main structural differences between the two languages (parataxis VS hypotaxis). In this regard, the analysis will point out that English and Italian show almost the same number of main and subordinate clauses. The latter will represent a further object of analysis, with reference to relative clauses. In this respect English shows some particular characteristics, since it allows for the omission of both the relative pronoun and the verb “to be”; this construction, named short relative clause, whose verb is expressed by the gerund, does not exist in Italian. A further contrast between the two languages is represented by the omission of the complementizer “that” in relative and complement clauses, a phenomenon which is not allowed in Italian.

## CHAPTER ONE

### UNMARKED AND MARKED WORD ORDER IN ENGLISH AND ITALIAN

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter will show the word-formation process and the linear order they occur within the sentence, which can be different from language to language. In this regard, as far as English and Italian are concerned, although very different from each other, they have the same word order within the sentence. Moreover, both may show a non-canonical order in some particular cases. This phenomenon, called marked word order, occurs much more frequently in Italian, but also in English as this section will show.

#### 1.1 Words composition-process

Every language is characterized by an indefinite number of speech sounds called phones, which correspond to vowels and consonants. These elements combine with each other and form words, made up of morphemes, that represent the “smallest grammatical unit in a language” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morpheme>). The main difference between the two elements is that the former are always freestanding, while the latter may or may not stand on their own. In this regard consider the following example:

- (3) a. “You’ve just ruined the punch line of my Japanese golfer joke.”  
(ChS,18)
- b. “Mi hai appena rovinato il finale della barzelletta sul golfista giapponese” (CS,19)

The word “golfer” (golfista) is composed of two kind of morphemes; the first one, “golf” functions as an independent word, since it refers to a sport, therefore it has a meaning on its own and does not need any further inflection. For this reason it is considered as a “free morpheme”, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morpheme>) and

represents the root, that is the base to which the other morphemes, “-er” in (3a) and “-ist” “-a” in (3b) are attached. This data is very important because it means that these three morphemes are not freestanding, like the former, therefore they are called bound morphemes. In this regard another distinction within this category can be made; the morpheme “-er” and “-ist” change the semantic meaning of the word, from golf, to golf-er, golf-ist-(a), that is an individual who plays golf. Consequently they are derivational morphemes, while the morpheme “-a”, shown in the Italian version at the end of the word, it is inflectional because it does not change the meaning of the word, but it has been added only to form the singular. The derivational and inflectional morphemes belong to the category of affixes. These elements are added to the right or to the left of the root to form new words. This morphological process, called derivation, is very productive in Romance languages such as Italian and French; thanks to the remarkable cultural influence of the latter, it is possible to find Romance affixes even in Germanic languages like English. This statement is confirmed by the subsequent pair:

- (4) a. He'd lived with the Dursleys almost ten years, ten miserable years.  
(PhS,27)
- b. Viveva con i Dursley da quasi dieci anni, dieci anni di infelicità.  
(PF,32)

The word “miserable” in (4a) is composed of a French suffix, “-able”, attached to the right of the root, represented by the noun “misery”. Consequently it may be noticed that the lexical category of the word has undergone a change, from a noun, “misery”, to an adjective “miser-able”. This adjective has been translated into Italian with an abstract noun, “in-felicità”, showing the prefixe “-in”, attached to the root “felicità” This element has been added in order to give a negative value to the noun, without modifying its semantic meaning, a function which is performed by suffix as seen above. The negative prefixe “-in” is very common in Italian, and also English uses it, however the German prefixe “-un” seems to be more productive, as the following sentences highlight:

- (5) a. A sudden, unpleasant thought struck him. (ChS,16)  
 b. Un pensiero improvviso e spiacevole gli attraversò la mente. (CS,18)
- (6) a. Harry felt into an uneasy sleep. (ChS,23)  
 b. Harry cadde in un sonno agitato. (CS,25)
- (7) a. Harry and Uncle Vernon watched Dudley unwrap the racing bike.  
 (PhS,21)  
 b. Harry e zio Vernon rimasero a guardare Dudley scartare la bicicletta da corsa. (PF,25)

The prefix “un-” corresponds to the Italian prefix “s-”, used to give a negative value to the adjective, like in (5b), and to show the opposite action described by the verb “incartare”. From the comparison it may be also noticed that the adjective “un-easy”, composed of the prefix “un-“, corresponds to the Italian adjective “agitato” This word derives from the past participle of the verb “agitare”, a statement confirmed by the presence of the suffix “-ato”, attached to the right of the root. This data is crucial because it shows that there is not always a perfect correspondence between the two languages; the negative prefix shown in (6a) can not be found in Italian because the correspondent adjective which describes a state of restlessness is “agitato”, and not “in-agitato”, that has the opposite meaning. Therefore in this context it is not possible to have a negative prefix. The subsequent pair will point out the opposite situation:

- (8) a. Dudley had laughed himself silly at Harry, who spent a sleepless night  
 imagining school the next day. (PhS,27)  
 b. Dudley era scoppiato a ridere a crepelle al vedere Harry così  
 conciato, e lui aveva passato una notte insonne al pensiero di come  
 sarebbe andata l’indomani a scuola. (PF,28)

The English version shows the suffix “-less”, used to highlight the lack of something. This element does not exist in Italian, in fact in order to show the aforementioned quality, the Italian language employs the negative prefix “in-“, present

in (8b). However, although Italian lacks this kind of suffix, it shows another typology, which is totally missing in English. In this regard consider the next pairs:

- (9) a. “I’m warning you”, he had said, putting his large purple face right up close to Harry’s. (PhS,28)  
b. “Ti avverto”, gli aveva detto, piazzandoglisi davanti col suo **faccione** paonazzo a un millimetro dal suo naso. (PF,27)
- (10) a. “Dinky Duddydums don’t cry! Mummy won’t let him spoil your special day!” she cried. (PhS,22)  
b. “Duddy, **tesorino** caro, non piangere! **Mammina** non permetterà che quello ti rovini la festa!”, esclamò. (PF,26)

The suffixes highlighted in the Italian version have the function of modifying the value of the root they are attached to. For instance, the suffix “-one” in (9b) emphasizes the quality of the character’s face, that is very big. Therefore it has an augmentative value. This kind of affixes, named modifying suffixes are typical of Italian, and can not be found in English because they do not exist at all. In fact the original version shows the pre-nominal adjective “large” in (9a) to refer to the particular feature of Uncle Vernon’s face. The next sentence, (10b) includes a further example of modifying suffixes, “-ino”, and “-ina”. In this case these elements represent a term of endearment, and are usually employed to show a relationship of affection between the speaker and the object or individual she/he refers to. Moreover, modifying suffixes can be also attached to verbs, as (11b) points out:

- (11) a. “No, no, no”, squeaked Dobby, shaking his head so hard his ears flapped (ChS,16)  
b. “No, non, no!” squittì Dobby, scuotendo la testa così forte da far sbata**acchiare** le orecchie di qua e di là. (CS,18)

The suffix “acchiare” has been added to the verb to show that the action takes place in a superficial and uncareful way.

The word-formation process illustrated so far is usually the most common, but it is not the only one; in this regard, there is also another composition method in which two words are combined giving rise to a compound noun, as the one shown in (12a):

- (12) a. It crept into their living - room. (PhS,19)  
b. Si insinuava nel loro soggiorno. (PF,22)

The noun “living-room” derives from the combination of an adjective, “living” and a noun “room”. Compound nouns may be also formed by two nouns:

- (13) a. Exactly why Dudley wanted a racing bike was a mystery to Harry.  
(PhS,20)  
b. Il motivo preciso per cui Dudley voleva una bici da corsa era un mistero per Harry. (PF,23)

The word shown to the right of the compound represents the most important element, the “head” because it determines the reference and the grammatical category of the compound (for a more detailed analysis, see chap.4). This construction is far more productive in English than in Romance languages such as Italian; indeed, in most cases the compound noun corresponds to a noun phrase in which the nominal or verbal modifier, that is the word placed to the left of the compound, is expressed by a preposition phrase (e.g., racing bike, translated as “bici da corsa”, PF, 23). What mentioned so far assumes a great importance; the fact that a word is labelled as noun or verb, or adjective as seen above, is crucial because it means that each of them receives a categorical label. As a result, every word has its own syntactic role within the sentence, according to which five classes of words or lexical categories are distinguished: prepositions, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, and verbs. In turn, these elements combine with each other to form phrases that represent a portion of the entire sentence. For instance, adjectives can be combined with a noun to form a noun phrase (for a more detailed analysis, see chap.4). As a consequence they become an integral part of



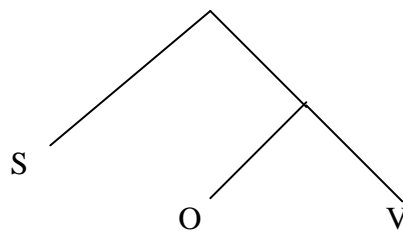
it, therefore are named constituents. The afore mentioned phrase, whose most important element is represented by the noun, becomes in turn a constituent of a sentence, since it can be located to the left as well as to the right of the verb thus representing the subject or the object. These elements have a fundamental role because they compose the sentence. Moreover, the order they appear within is not universal but can vary depending on the language, as it will be shown in the next paragraph.

### 1.2 Unmarked word order

Phonemes, morphemes, and words are realized in a linear order. Typology classifies languages according to general tendencies in which the major component of the sentences (Subject, Object, and Verb) appear relative to each other. For instance Latin is characterised by an S+O+V order as shown in the following example taken from Giusti (2003:107)

(14) Caesar castris locum idoneum legit.

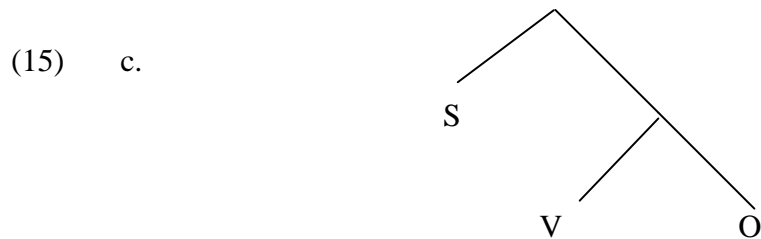
The direct object is found before the verb, as a result the verb phrase, whose head is represented by the verb, branches to the left, as shown by the following tree diagram:



As far as English and Italian are concerned, they show a word order which is different from Latin. This statement is confirmed by the following pairs taken from the second volume of Harry Potter's saga (chap.2):

- (15) a. The elf hung his head. (ChS,13)
- b. L'elfo chinò il capo. (CS,14)

From the comparison it can be seen that the main clause shows the direct object to the right of the verb in both versions in both versions, therefore the two languages are characterised by an S+V+O order. This means that unlike Latin, the verb phrase branches off rightwards, thus the structure of both examples in (15a-b) can be represented as (15c):



The verb phrase represents the most important element of the sentence; the verb plays an essential role because, according to the argument structure it has, the number of participants required in the sentence may change; for instance, the verb shown in the examples illustrated above is transitive. It requires the presence of two participants: the first one is represented by the subject, which receives both the thematic role of the agent of the activity, as shown in (15) and also the nominative case if it appears in a finite clause. The second participant is represented by the direct object, which is the theme of the action done by the subject in (15), as well as the verb phrase internal argument. Its presence is compulsory in order to assign accusative case, otherwise the sentence is ungrammatical:

(15) d. \*The elf hung.

e. \*L'elfo chinò.

The ungrammaticality of the sentence is due to the fact that the action is not transferred to the direct object, which is missing, therefore the verb fails to assign a thematic role and accusative case.

Nevertheless, in some cases the canonical order illustrated above may be subject to variation even in an unmarked context, as shown by (16a) and (16b):

- (16) a. Dobby shuddered. (ChS,14)  
b. Dobby rabbrividì. (CS,16)

Both sentences are composed by only S+V, since they lack the direct object. Its absence is due to the fact that “to shudder” (rabbrivire) is a monovalent intransitive verb. Consequently it does not assign accusative case, therefore the presence of the direct object is not necessary. The only participant required is the subject, which is the agent of the activity. The difference between the two example pairs illustrated above confirm the fundamental role played by the verb; in addition to assigning thematic roles to its arguments (theta roles), it determines the composition of the sentence, based on the argument structure that can require the presence of one or two arguments, as seen above, but also three as in the case of the double object constructions demonstrated below:

- (17) a. Dobby gave him a tragic look. (ChS,19)  
b. Dobby gli lanciò un’occhiata tragica. (CS,21)

The verb “to give” (dare) is ditransitive because in addition to the subject, it requires the presence of two objects represented respectively by the theme ( the manuscript) and by the beneficiary ( the person who receives the manuscript). Instead, in some cases the verb can be characterized by the absence of arguments. For this reason it is called zero valence verb. This category includes the meteorological verbs:

- (18) a. It rains.  
b. Piove.

From the comparison it can be noted that both the direct object and the subject are absent, in fact the sentence is made up only by the verb. However English shows an element which occupies the subject position, that is the expletive “it”; it does not refer to any entity in the discourse but it is only used to fill the subject position otherwise left empty. As it will be seen in the next chapter, the subject has to be

always expressed in English (for a more detailed analysis, see chapter 2); this element is usually located to the left of the verb, as highlighted by the previous examples. It is the known part of the discourse, the Topic, while the remaining part of the sentence is called “Comment” (Giusti, 2003:109). Sometimes, however, its position can be occupied by a different element ; if this happens the sentence shows a non canonical order, called marked word order, analysed in the next paragraph.

### **1.3 Marked word order**

A “marked” word order is atypical, different from the “natural” one shown in (15a) and (15b). This phenomenon occurs much more frequently in Italian because this language is richer than English in verbal morphology and in the marking of object positions via clitic pronouns, which are not present at all in English. This statement can be confirmed by the following pairs:

- (19) a. If he’d had a sister like that. (PhS,9)  
b. Se l’avesse avuta lui, una sorella così. (PF,9)

The hypothetic clause in (19b) shows an atypical order; the direct object, represented by the noun phrase “una sorella così”, found at the end of the sentence, has been pronominalised by the clitic pronoun “l’” (la), placed before the verb. Therefore there is a double reference to the direct object, thus representing the focalized element or focal phrase. This marked construction named Focus shows another particular feature in Italian, that is the post-verbal position of the subject, triggered by the presence of the clitic pronoun before the verb as mentioned above. One may note that it is also possible to emphasize an element by putting it in contrast with another one present in the sentence. This syntactic construction, named contrastive focus may be realized in Italian with a particular kind of sentence, illustrated below:

- (20) a. He was usually the one who held people’s arms behind their backs, while Dudley hit them. (PhS,22)  
b. Era lui che in genere immobilizzava le persone con le braccia dietro la schiena mentre Dudley le picchiava. (PF, 27)

The sentences describe two actions performed by two different individuals. In this regard, the highlighting of the agent of the first action is done in Italian by a particular construction known as cleft sentence which consists of two clauses; the first one is the main clause in which the focalised element, (or focal phrase), represented by the subject pronoun is found after the verb “era”, expressed by the Simple Past. Therefore it occupies a post verbal position; the dislocation of this element to the right of the verb is compulsory in this construction, otherwise the sentence would be unnatural:

- (20) c. ? Lui era quello che immobilizzava le persone con le braccia dietro la schiena mentre Dudley le picchiava.

This element is followed by the relative pronoun “che” that introduces the relative clause, which describes the action performed by the second individual. This clause is present even in the English version, however the comparison shows a contrast between the two languages, because the focalization has been realised in a different way in (20a); in this regard, the original version shows the pronoun “the one”, used to emphasize the action done by the first individual, represented by the subject pronoun “he”, that occupies the canonical position. The dislocation of the focalised element to the right of the verb is not allowed in English because the subject position would be left empty (\*Was he the one). This contrast confirms that English has a more rigid word order than Italian.

However there may be exceptions to that rule, since there are some particular cases where English may allow the dislocation of an element to the left of the subject. In this regard consider the following pairs:

- (21) a. “Roaring along like maniacs, the young hoodlums...” he said, as a motorbike overtook them. (PhS,24)  
b. “Corrono come pazzi, questi giovani teppisti!” esclamò mentre una moto li sorpassava. (PF,29)

The main clause included within the quotation shows a non-canonical order in both versions, because the verb is found in the preceding position of the subject. This is surprising if one thinks about English, a language characterized by a very

rigid word order as seen above. The verb expressed by the gerund in (21a) and by the Simple present in (21b) has been put at the beginning of the clause, in the Topic position in order to emphasize the way the action is done by the subject. This leftward movement is typical of a particular marked construction named Topicalization, a phenomenon which is set off prosodically by a comma, that separates the verb phrase from the subject in (21). The next pairs show a further example of topicalization:

- (22) a. Very strange strangers, they were, too. (PhS,27)  
b. Ed erano degli estranei veramente strani. (PF,33)

In this case it is the original English version which shows an atypical word order; the element found at the beginning of the sentence is a predicative nominal over the subject; it has been placed in the Topic position to emphasize the quality assigned to the noun, expressed by the adjective “strange”. Conversely, the Italian version shows a canonical order; the predicative expression can not be separated from the copula, represented by the verb “erano”, otherwise the sentence would be rather marginal, especially in the written form, where an appropriate intonation would be difficult to signal:

- (22) c. #Ed estranei veramente strani erano.

Besides this, the predicative adjective cannot be omitted since it is part of the predicative expression, which is connected in turn with the linking verb. For this reason its absence would give rise to an unacceptable sentence in both languages:

- (23) a. \*They were, too.  
b. \*Ed erano degli estranei.

This data is crucial because the predicative adjective contrasts with the adjuncts, shown in (24) and (25):

- (24) a. At school, Harry had no one. (PhS,27)  
b. A scuola, Harry non aveva amici. (PF,33)

- (25) a. Slowly, Dobby shook his head. (ChS, 17)  
b. Lentamente, Dobby scosse il capo. (CS, 18)

These elements are not selected directly by the verb, so their presence is optional. This means that their possible omission does not make the sentences ungrammatical because it would have sense all the same:

- (26) a. Harry had no one.  
b. Harry non aveva amici.

- (27) a. Dobby shook his head.  
b. Dobby scosse il capo.

As a result, they have been added to provide extra information. The elements that belongs to the category of adjuncts specify time, place and manner in which the action takes place, as those represented by the prepositional phrase in (24) and by the modal adverb in (25). Their presence to the left of the subject in both languages is aimed at emphasizing the circumstance in which the action takes place, whose highlighting is also realised by a marked prosody, represented by a comma that separates the adjuncts from the subject. Moreover, adjuncts may also occur between the subject and the verb as (28b) points out:

- (28) a. The room held no sign at all that another boy lived in the house too.  
(PhS,19)  
b. Nulla, in quella stanza denotava che in casa viveva anche un altro bambino. (PF,22)

The adjunct, represented by the preposition phrase “in quella stanza”, has been placed between the subject, that is the negative pronoun and the verb. This order is not allowed in English, since the original version shows a canonical order. In this respect an adjunct can not be found between the subject and the verb, otherwise the sentence would be ungrammatical:

- (28) c. \*Nothing, in the room, held sign that another boy lived in the house too.

#### **1.4 Conclusions**

The data analysed in this chapter have not initially found any contrast between the two languages since they show the same canonical order, S+V+O. Moreover, both of them allow an element to be placed before the subject in some marked constructions. However, the comparative analysis has underlined that English is characterised by a greater rigidity in the distribution of constituents within the sentence, especially in the case of focalization, since it is not possible to find post-verbal subject pronouns as focalised elements. This difference between the two languages is crucial; for this reason it will be deeply analysed in the next paragraph, with particular reference to the subject position.



## CHAPTER TWO

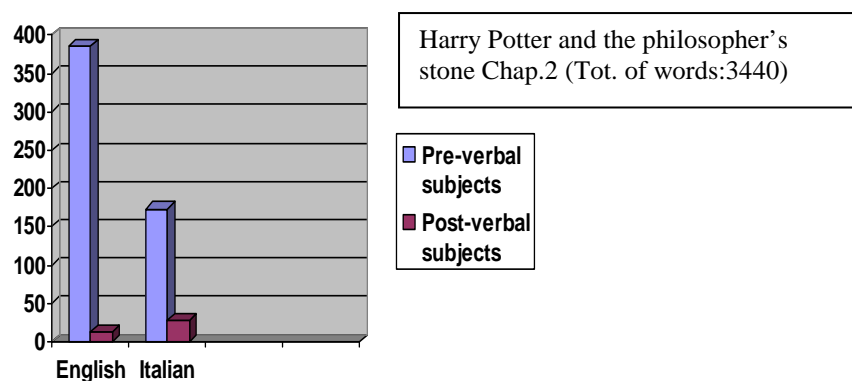
### THE POSITION OF THE SUBJECT

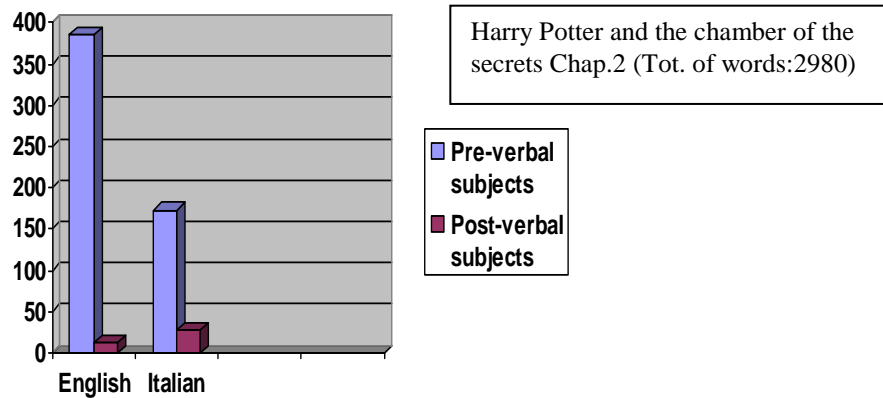
#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the position of the subject in English and Italian. In this regard a qualitative and quantitative analysis will be carried out in order to highlight contrasts, similarities as well as some cases of attrition between the two languages. The comparative analysis will also highlight some particular constructions where the subject occupies a non-canonical position in English, thus showing an atypical behaviour.

#### 2.1 Pre-verbal vs Post-verbal subject

The subject is the first argument of the sentence; usually it represents the known part of the discourse, what is being talked about, namely the Topic. For this reason, it is placed at the beginning of the sentence, to the left of the verb, and represents the external argument. The examples illustrated in the previous chapter confirm this statement because both languages showed a pre-verbal subject in the unmarked order. However, Italian, unlike English, seems to enjoy greater freedom in the placement of this element; in this regard the results of the following graphs show that there is a lower percentage of pre-verbal subject in the Italian translation:





This is due to the fact that Italian allows the possibility to omit the subject, as will be seen afterwards, as well as the possibility to place it to the right of the verb. This feature is typical of the afore mentioned language; the dislocation of the subject from its canonical pre-verbal position may occur in marked constructions, such as focalization, analysed in the previous chapter, but also in unmarked sentences if the subject represents a newly introduced element in the discourse, that is the rheme as shown in (29b):

- (29) a. “In the car crash when your parents died” she had said. “And don’t ask questions”. (PhS,20)  
 b. “Nell’incidente d’auto in cui sono morti i tuoi genitori” le aveva risposto lei, “e non fare domande”. (PF,24)

Also note that the dislocation of the subject to the non-canonical position is strictly linked to the nature of the verb; in this regard, “morire” (to die) is intransitive, therefore it does not require the presence of the direct object. Moreover, it indicates a change of state which is independent from the subject’s will. For these reasons it belongs to the category of unaccusative verbs. In addition to the action described in (29), they also describe a change in direction as a result of motion, represented by verbs such as “arrivare”, “entrare”, and a state like sitting (*stare accovacciato*), as will be seen in the following paragraph. This kind of verbs have a particular feature because they do not assign accusative case to the object; consequently the subject can occupy the object position in unmarked construction like (29b), thus becoming a sort of verb phrase internal argument. Also note that the post-verbal position is even compulsory with some unaccusative verbs, like the one shown in (30b):

- (30) a. The problem was strange things often happened around Harry.  
(PhS,23)
- b. Il fatto era che spesso intorno a Harry accadevano fatti strani. (PF,28)

This is confirmed by the fact that movement of the subject to its canonical position would give rise to an unnatural sentence in Italian:

- (30) c. ? Il fatto era che spesso intorno a Harry fatti strani accadevano.

The same situation occurs with negative pronominal quantifiers as the following pair highlights:

- (31) a. But Uncle Vernon didn't believe him. No one ever did. (PhS,23)
- b. Ma Zio Vernon non gli credeva. Nessuno gli credeva mai. (PF,28)

From the comparison it can be noted that the second main clause is introduced by a pre-verbal subject in both languages. This element is represented by the negative quantifier (*No one / Nessuno*). However, this placement gives rise to an unnatural sentence in the Italian version, since negative quantifiers are usually found to the right of the verb. Consequently the sentence would sound better:

- (31) c. Non gli credeva mai nessuno.

It is also possible to put the negative quantifier before the verb, in order to emphasize the circumstance described in the sentence, but in this case one may infer that the translator was influenced by English, that requires the compulsory presence of pre-verbal subjects, therefore she has applied this rule to the Italian translation.

The greater freedom of constituents order, typical of Italian can be also noted in the presence of psychological verbs:

- (32) a. Nobody liked to disagree with Dudley's gang. (PhS, 27)
- b. A nessuno piaceva mettersi contro la ghenga di Dudley. (PF, 33)

This category of verbs assigns two thematic roles; the experiencer, that is the individual who feels the state of mind described by the verb, and the theme (cause or stimulus), that is the person, object, or animal that provokes the state of mind. In (32b), the experiencer is expressed by a preposition phrase (A nessuno) located at the beginning of the sentence, in the subject position.

Also note that it would have been possible to invert the constituents order, placing the stimulus to the left of the verb, thus determining the dislocation of the preposition phrase in the object position, without causing ungrammaticality:

(32) c. Mettersi contro la ghenga di Dudley non piaceva a nessuno. OK

English instead does not allow for such a construction; the experiencer must be always expressed as a subject, as shown in (32a). Therefore it cannot occupy a position which is different from the canonical one; moreover it cannot be expressed by a prepositional phrase:

(32) d. \*To disagree with Dudley's gang liked nobody.

e. \*To nobody liked to disagree with Dudleys' gang.

The comparative analysis carried out so far, has highlighted a crucial difference between the two languages; Italian, in addition to allowing post-verbal subjects, also shows the possibility not to express them, as demonstrated in (33b):

(33) a. He dragged Harry back upstairs. (ChS, 21)

b. Trascinò Harry al piano di sopra. (CS, 22)

The Italian version does not show the subject pronoun; its presence is not necessary because it can be easily understood that the subject is singular and not plural. The possibility to have a null subject pronoun (pro) or zero subject is typical of the Italian language, known as a pro-drop language, characterized by a very rich verbal morphology. For this reason, even if the subject is not expressed, it can be easily identified by the verb or the auxiliary, which therefore

distinguishes it from all the other people. However, sometimes the subject may be explicit, if one wants to highlight it, especially in a situation where a contrast is shown:

- (34) a. Mrs Dursley fell asleep quickly but Mr Dursley lay awake, turning it all over in his mind. (PhS,11)  
b. Lei si addormentò subito, ma lui rimase lì steso, con gli occhi sbarrati, a rigirarsi tutto quanto nella mente. (PF,11)

In the Italian translation the subjects have been expressed in order to highlight the fact that they do opposite actions; the first one falls asleep, while the second one is awake. Consequently the presence of the subject is used to contrast it with another one present in the sentence. Therefore in this case the analysis has underlined a similarity between the two languages, since both of them show the subject. As far as English is concerned, it does not allow for the absence of this element, because it is a non-pro drop language. As a result, it is not possible to find null subject pronouns. This is due to the fact that this language is characterised by a poor verbal morphology. Consequently, if the subject is absent one is not able to understand who it refers to:

- (34) c. \*Dragged Harry back upstairs.

For this reason even when the sentence does not have a Topic, English utilizes the expletive “it” as shown by (35a):

- (35) a. It looked as though Dudley had got the new computer he wanted.  
(PhS, 20)  
b. Sembrava proprio che Dudley fosse riuscito ad ottenere il nuovo computer che desiderava tanto. (PF, 23)

The verb shown at the beginning of the sentences is a raising verb); “it is a construction where a given predicate or verb takes a dependent that is not its

semantic argument, but rather the semantic argument of an embedded predicate” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raising\\_\(linguistics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raising_(linguistics))). It provides an optional experiencer and a compulsory phrasal argument, which can be non-finite or finite, as the one shown above, introduced by the complementizer “che” in (35b) and by “as though” in (35a). In this case, English requires the compulsory presence of the expletive “it” at the beginning of the sentence, as seen in (35a). It is an element that does not refer to any entity of the discourse but serves only to fill the otherwise empty position left by the subject.

This confirms the impossibility of finding a zero subject in English; this feature, typical of this language, can sometimes be inadvertently applied in Italian. Consider the following examples:

- (36) a. “Tell Petunia that very funny story about those American plumbers, Mr. Mason. She’s been dying to hear...” (ChS, 19)  
b. “Signor Mason, racconti a Petunia quella buffissima storiella degli idraulici americani... Lei muore dalla voglia di sentirla...” (CS, 20)

In both versions, the subject of the second sentence included in the quotation is expressed (*She/Lei*). However, its presence in (36b) is not necessary; in fact it would have been better to have a zero subject:

- (36) c. Muore dalla voglia di sentirla.

Hence, (36b) can be considered as a clear example of linguistic attrition, because the translator seems to be influenced by English, which always requires the presence of the subject, therefore she has applied this rule to the Italian version.

The examples analysed thus far confirm the postulate referred to the well known fixity of word order in English as it is not possible to find post-verbal subjects. Moreover, their omission within the sentence is not allowed. However, despite this rigidity, there are some particular cases where English may allow the dislocation of the subject to the right of the verb.

## 2.2 Post-verbal subjects in English

### 2.2.1 Locative inversion

This type of construction indicates the place or the direction in which the subject of the sentence is found:

- (37) a. On top of a cupboard in the corner crouched Dobby. (ChS, 19)  
b. In cima ad un armadio, nell'angolo stava accovacciato Dobby.  
(CS, 20)

From the comparison, it can be noted that both languages show a non canonical order, because the sentence starts with two prepositional phrases, and the subject occupies the post-verbal position. The subject-verb inversion derives from two factors: firstly, only locative preposition phrase expressing direction or position can trigger inversion in English. Consequently, this would rule out preposition phrase expressing manner, instrument, reason and time:

- (38) a. He left the building at five o'clock (PhS,8)  
b. Lasciò l'ufficio alle cinque. (PF,9)

As far as the verb is concerned, it plays a very important role in this construction since only unaccusative verbs are admitted. In this regard, the verb shown in (37) belongs to this category because it is intransitive and expresses a state (*crouch=be sitting*) as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Consequently, it does not assign accusative case to the object. Therefore the subject can be placed after the verb, thus becoming a verb phrase internal argument, since the canonical position is occupied by the preposition phrase. This demonstrates that transitive verbs are not allowed in the construction (39 has been taken from Coopman (1989:730)):

- (39) \*Into the room rolled John a ball.

The sentence is ungrammatical because the transitive verb requires the presence of the object in order to assign accusative case, so the two elements must be close to each other. This means that the subject cannot be found between the verb and the object for reasons of case adjacency. Consequently it must occupy the canonical position, at the beginning of the sentence where it receives nominative case:

(40) John rolled a ball into the room.

### 2.2.2 Existential constructions

This type of construction is used to indicate an indefinite quantity, as shown by (41):

- (41) a. “There is a plot, Harry Potter”. (ChS,16)  
b. “C’è un complotto, Harry Potter”. (CS,18)

Again a similarity can be noted between the two languages; both sentences show the subject after the verb, and the canonical position is occupied by the expletive “there” in (41a) and by the locative clitic “ci” in (41b). These two elements are both expletives because they do not refer to any entity in the discourse, but only have the function of filling the otherwise empty position of the subject. The existential constructions can only be applied with the copula “be”, shown above and with some unaccusative verbs (42 is from Giusti 2003: 119):

(42) There arrived three people (over) there.

A further restriction is related to the subject, which must be indefinite. This rule especially applies to English, where the presence of a defined noun phrase is not allowed. This statement is confirmed by the following example:

- (43) a. Ron Weasley was outside Harry’s window. (ChS, 23)  
b. Fuori della sua finestra c’era Ron Weasley. (CS, 24)



The comparison demonstrates that the original version does not show an existential construction, unlike Italian, where the post-verbal subject is represented by a proper noun. This element occupies the canonical position in (43a), at the beginning of the sentence, thus confirming the impossibility of finding a definite noun phrase in English existential construction. However there may be exceptions to this rule, as (44a) highlights:

- (44) a. “Well, then, I can’t think who else would have a chance of making horrible things happen at Hogwarts”, said Harry. “I mean, there is Dumbledore for one thing.” (ChS, 17)
- b. “Be’, non riesco a pensare a nessun altro che possa far succedere cose orribili a Hogwarts” disse Harry. “Voglio dire, prima di tutto c’ è Silente”. (CS, 19)

Both versions display the proper noun as a definite post-verbal subject. The presence of this element is allowed in English if the copula “be” is also present, and especially if the subject is understood to be a member of a group. These two conditions are met in (44a), as the construction shows the verb “to be” and the subject is a member of a list reading. This is confirmed by the words in the second quote in (44b), “prima di tutto”, which suggest a list.

### 2.2.3 Quotative constructions

This construction, known as direct speech, is used to create dialogues between characters, included within quotations, as indicated by the presence of quotation marks (“”). It is different from indirect speech, as the following examples show:

- (45) a. He wanted to ask: “What are you?” (ChS,13)
- b. Avrebbe voluto chiedere: “Che cosa sei?” (CS,14)

- (46) a. Harry often said that Dudley looked like a pig in a wig. (PhS,21)  
 b. Harry diceva spesso che Dudley sembrava un maiale con la parrucca.  
 (PF,25)

Indirect speech consists of two sentences: the main clause and the subordinate declarative clause, introduced by the complementizer “that” (“che” in Italian). This element is absent in the quotative construction because the discourse is reported as uttered in the speech time; this is confirmed by the fact that the verb of the quote can be in the Present Simple. Conversely, the verb included in the subordinate declarative clause shows *consecutio temporum* (anaphoric tense), as shown by the Simple Past, which expresses contemporaneity to the past tense of the main clause. This is due to the fact that the discourse has been said before the “speech time”. Another feature which distinguishes the two constructions is represented by the fact that the quotation has greater freedom of movement with respect to the subordinate clause; in fact it may be located to the right of the matrix verb as shown in (45), but it can also stand alone:

- (47) a. “May I take your coats, Mr. and Mrs. Mason?” (ChS,12)  
 b. “Prego, signori Mason, volete darmi i soprabiti?” (CS,13)

In this case the matrix verb and subject are absent, therefore, according to what has been mentioned above, the quotation behaves like a main clause, since it can stand on its own.

Moreover, it can also occupy the pre-verbal position, at the beginning of the sentence. This is crucial because it is the only case in which English allows the presence of a post-verbal subject. In this regard consider the following pairs:

- (48) a. “Now what?” said Aunt Petunia (PhS,22)  
 b. “E ora che si fa?” chiese Zia Petunia (PF,23)

From the comparison, it can be noted that both versions show a post-verbal subject in (48), as it follows the matrix verb. This is due to the fact that it is a

referential expression (*Aunt Petunia*). Other particular features which can be noted is referred to the fact that the English version lacks the verb within the quotative construction, while the Italian translation shows it in the impersonal form. In addition, the matrix verb “said” has been translated into Italian with “chiese” because it sounds more natural since the character has made a question. Now consider the next example:

- (49) a. "Read it!", he hissed evilly. (ChS,20)  
b. "Leggila!" sibilò con tono malevolo. (CS,21)

In this case the subject occupies a position that is different from the one illustrated above, since it is found before the *verbum dicendi*. This shift is due to the fact that the subject is represented by a pronoun. Consequently it must occupy the pre-verbal position. Otherwise the construction would be ungrammatical:

- (49) c. \*Read it!" hissed he evilly.

Also note that the matrix verb refers to the sound of the snake in both languages. This has been done in order to show the way the character speaks. The data analysed so far have highlighted some particular construction where also English may allow for the subject to be found after the verb, thus making a perfect parallelism with Italian. Beside, in some cases this element may be even omitted; this phenomenon, called null topic may occur in English although very rarely.

### **2.3 A particular case of zero subject in English**

The examples illustrated in 2.1 have confirmed that it is not possible to have an implicit subject in English, due to the reduced verbal morphology it shows. However, in colloquial and diary styles, this element may be missing, as shown in (50):

- (50) a. “You didn’t tell us you weren’t allowed to use magic outside school”,  
said Uncle Vernon, a mad gleam dancing in his eyes. “Forgot to  
mention it...Slipped your mind, I daresay...” (ChS, 21)
- b. “Non ci avevi detto che non ti era consentito usare la magia fuori della  
scuola” disse Zio Vernon, con un lampo di furore negli occhi. “Hai  
dimenticato di dirlo... Ti è passato di mente immagino..” (CS, 22)

The second quotation, which highlights the continuation of the discourse, shows two null subjects in both languages. This phenomenon is uncommon in English, where the subject has to be always expressed. Therefore this is an atypical behaviour known as null Topic, which can occur only in very limited cases; in fact the omission of the subject is not permitted after the auxiliary in interrogative sentences, or after the complementizer in subordinate clauses (the examples are taken from Giusti 2003:177):

(51) Am \* (I) jealous?

(52) I don’t know when \* (I) will come back.

This demonstrates that the subject can be absent only if it represents the Topic of the sentence. In the first quotation in (50a) the speaker addresses his interlocutor using the subject pronoun “you”. In the next quotation he continues to address the same person. As a result, one can easily understand that the implicit subject is represented by the same pronoun, “you” (“You forgot to mention it”), which is the topic of the sentence, that is, what is being talked about. The null subject shown in the last sentence is referred to the situation described in the previous quotation, what Harry forgot to say, which corresponds to the subject pronoun “it” in English (“It slipped your mind, I daresay”).

## 2.4 Conclusions

The examples analysed in this chapter have demonstrated that despite the well known rigidity of the constituent order, English may allow exceptions to general rule of mandatory preverbal subject. In fact, the constructions outlined above,

were characterized by the presence of post-verbal subjects in both languages, thus making a perfect parallelism with Italian. This suggests then that it is not entirely true that the subject is always located to the left of the verb in English. Furthermore, in some cases, albeit very limited, this element can even be omitted. Therefore, even in this case the comparative analysis has highlighted an unexpected similarity between the two languages.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE VERB PHRASE**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter will focus on the verb phrase which is the most important element in the sentence. As seen in the previous section, besides triggering the post-verbal position of the subject in Romance languages such as Italian, it is also responsible for assigning thematic roles to the participants present within the sentence, represented by the subject and the object. Their presence, or possible absence, is closely related to the argument structure of the verb. In this regard, the analysis will demonstrate that it is not always possible to have a perfect parallelism between the languages; for instance, some English transitive verbs correspond to intransitive verbs in Italian, and vice versa. A further contrast will be seen in presence of complement clauses, situated to the right of the verb. In this case it is noted that not all of the English verbs may select a finite complement clause, while Italian allows for both. The chapter will be divided in two parts; the first will be devoted to lexical verbs. In this regard, the attention will be first focused on verbs selecting an internal argument. Afterward verbs that do not select any direct object will be analysed. The second part will be devoted to the analysis of functional verbs, namely those verbs that carry tense, mood, modality and are combined with lexical verbs in a single predicate.

#### **3.1 Lexical verbs**

Lexical verbs show a semantic content that select an internal argument. This element may be represented by noun phrases, as well as adverbs, preposition and sentences.

##### **3.1.1 Transitive verbs**

As seen in the first chapter, transitive verbs require the presence of the subject and object to assign accusative case. As far as the former is concerned, it is generally known as the Agent, that is, the individual who performs the action described in the sentence. This statement is true in most cases and it is confirmed both by the

traditional grammar and by the examples illustrated in the first chapter (paragraph 1.2). However, this element cannot always be considered as the agent of the activity. In this regard, consider the following examples:

- (53) a. Harry supposed that the wind must have caught him in mid-jump.  
(PhS,24)
- b. Harry credeva che, a metà di quel salto, una folata di vento lo avesse sollevato in aria. (PF, 28)
- (54) a. Harry had a thin face, knobbly knees, black hairs ad bright-green eyes.  
(PhS,20)
- b. Harry aveva un viso sottile, ginocchia nodose, capelli neri e occhi verde chiaro. (PF,24)
- (55) a. The Dursleys had received a very angry letter from Harry's headmistress. (PhS,23)
- b. I Dursley avevano ricevuto una lettera molto indignata della direttrice.  
(PF,28)

The verb shown within the complement clause in (53) describes an action, however the subject that performs it is not animate, since it is an atmospheric agent. Therefore, the action does not imply volition. As a result, the subject does not represent the agent of the action, but the cause of it. Finally, in the last two examples, the subject does not perform any action. In fact, in (54) it is simply the owner of the physical characteristics described by the sentence, while in (55) it is the recipient of the letter, the destination. This suggests that it is not always true that the subject is the one who performs the action, as has been demonstrated so far.

With regard to the argument structure, it is known that the sentences which contain transitive verbs are characterized by a canonical order. However, there may be cases in which there is not always a perfect correspondence between the languages as the following sentences highlight:

- (56) a. Uncle Vernon entered the kitchen. (PhS,20)  
b. Zio Vernon entrò in cucina. (PF,24)

From the comparison it can be noted that the English version shows a transitive verb, since the noun phrase that follows it represents the internal argument; its absence would make the sentence ungrammatical (\*Uncle Vernon entered). In contrast, the verb “entrare” is intransitive in Italian and is followed by a preposition phrase. This suggests therefore, that the two verbs, despite having the same thematic structure (the subject labelled as the agent of the action) have a different argument structure. This phenomenon also occurs with another verb, “to answer” (*rispondere*), as shown by the sentences below:

- (57) a. At that moment the telephone rang and Aunt Petunia went to answer it.  
(PhS, 21)  
b. In quel momento, squillò il telefono e zia Petunia andò a rispondere.  
(PF, 25)

In the original version it can be noted that the above mentioned verb is followed by the object pronoun “it” that represents the internal argument, given that this verb is transitive, in fact it is said “answer the phone”. Instead, the Italian verb “rispondere” does not have a direct object since it is intransitive. Consequently it selects a preposition phrase “rispondere al telefono”, and not a noun phrase (?\*rispondere il telefono”). This suggests that even in this case the verb shows the same thematic structure, with the agent of the action as the subject, but the argument structure is different, and the internal object is direct and mandatory in English, while prepositional and optional in Italian.

It is also noted that sometimes the opposite situation occurs, since there are transitive verbs in English, which correspond instead to a transitive verb in Italian. This topic will be discussed in the paragraph devoted to intransitive verbs.



### 3.1.2 Reflexive verbs

Reflexive verbs represent another type of transitive verbs, in which the verb phrase's internal argument and the subject are co-referents in the sentence, as the example shows:

- (58) a. "Dobby had to punish himself sir" (ChS,14)  
b. "Dobby doveva punirsi, signore" (CS,16)

The action described by the verb is made by the subject that is also the object to which the action falls upon, therefore the two elements refer to the same individual. The reflexive form, is indicated by the anaphoric pronoun "himself" in English, as shown in (58a), while Italian usually shows the clitic "si", included in the verb as shown in (58b). It is also noted that it is possible to express the reflexive form by inserting the pronoun "se stesso" in Italian:

- (58) c. Dobby doveva punire se stesso.

This is a valid test to verify whether a verb is truly reflexive or not. In this regard, the verb "pettinarsi" has to be considered; the presence of the morpheme "si" suggests a reflexive verb. This statement is confirmed by the application of the above mentioned test; in this regard the sentence seems correct but in a slightly different interpretation. However, the presence of the clitic shouldn't be misleading, as demonstrated by the following example:

- (59) a. "Comb your hair" he barked, by a way of morning greetings. (PhS,20)  
b. "Fila a pettinarti!" sbraitò a mo' di buongiorno. (PF,24)  
c. ??Fila a pettinare te stesso!

In the English version, the imperative verb "comb" is followed by the noun phrase "your hair" and not by the anaphoric pronoun "yourself". This data is crucial because it reveals the real nature of the verb, which is only apparently reflexive. Despite the presence of the morpheme "ti" included in the verb (59b), the

reflexive interpretation is ruled out since the action is done to the hair and not to the individual itself. Consequently, the clitic expresses a change of state, from being ruffled to being combed; hence “pettinarsi” may be interpreted as an unaccusative verb.

Another verb that is often wrongly considered reflexive is shown in (60b):

- (60) a. He was careful to walk a little way apart from the Dursleys, so that Dudley and Piers, who were starting to get bored with the animals by lunch time, wouldn't fall back on their favourite hobby of hitting him. (PhS,24)
- b. Ebbe cura di camminare a una certa distanza dai Dursley in modo che Dudley e Piers, che per l'ora di pranzo avevano già cominciato ad annoiarsi degli animali, non tornassero al loro passatempo preferito di prenderlo a pugni. (PF,30)

Also the verb included within the appositive relative clause (“annoarsi”), is characterized by the presence of the clitic “si”. Even in this case the reflexive nature of the verb is disproved, because by replacing the morpheme with the anaphoric pronoun “loro stessi” the sentence is ungrammatical

- (60) c. ?\*Dudley e Piers avevano già cominciato ad annoiare loro stessi.

Consequently, also this verb has an unaccusative value, since it indicates a change of state, from having fun to being bored. In English, the only way to express the unaccusative state of a verb is represented by the structure “get + adjective” shown in (60a).

It is also noted that the morpheme “si” appears in Italian in presence of verbs followed by inalienable possessive nouns, such as “slogarsi una caviglia, rompersi un piede”, etc. In this case it is used to express the relationship between the owner and the part of the body (for a more detailed analysis, see chapter 4, paragraph 4.2.4).

Moreover, this element may also have a reciprocal value, as confirmed by (61 b), where the clitic “si” is found:

- (61) a. As they stared at each other, Harry heard Dudley’s voice from the hall.  
(ChS,12)  
b. Mentre si squadravano a vicenda, Harry udì la voce di Dudley nell’ingresso. (CS,14)

The action performed by one individual falls on the other, and vice versa. The value of reciprocity is expressed in English through the pronoun “each other” in (61a) and by the preposition phrase “a vicenda” in (61b).

The data analysed so far has demonstrated that not all verbs are true reflexives, despite the presence of the clitic “si”. The only way to verify their true nature consists of applying the test mentioned above.

### **3.1.3 Verbs selecting complement clauses**

The verbs analysed until now showed a noun complement, in the case of transitive verbs, and an anaphoric pronoun in the case of reflexive verbs. However, the internal argument may be also represented by another type of direct object. In this regard there are verbs that may also select a clause as internal argument as (63a) and (63b) highlight:

- (62) a. “I don’t know about that” (PhS,10)  
b. “Su questo non so dirti niente” (PF,12)
- (63) a. He didn’t know what time it was. (PhS,27)  
b. Non sapeva che ora fosse. (PF,32)

The difference between the two types of complements lies in the fact that the noun complement can be preceded by a preposition, as shown by (62a) and (62b), while the complement phrase does not allow for this type of construction (\*He didn’t know about what time it was).

The complement clauses are divided into two categories: finite complement clauses, like those in (63) and non-finite complement clauses. In this respect, the comparative analysis will highlight parallelism as well as contrasts between English and Italian on the use of the complementizer.

### 3.1.3.1 Finite complement clauses

Finite complement clauses usually show a verb expressed in the Simple Past, and are introduced by the complementizer. In this regard, the following pair will highlight a parallelism between the two languages, since both of them show the afore mentioned element:

- (64) a. Harry often said that Dudley looked like a pig in a wig. (PhS,21)  
b. Harry diceva spesso che Dudley sembrava un maiale con la parrucca.  
(PF,24)

The complement clause illustrated above represent an indirect speech; the verb that introduces them, “to say” (dire) is used very frequently in this type of structure. In this regard, English also shows another verb with the same meaning, “to tell”. However, the comparison between these two verbs gives rise to some contrasts:

- (64) c. Harry often said that Dudley looked like a pig in a wig. (PhS,21)  
(65) a. Mr Mason stayed just long enough to tell the Dursleys that his wife was mortally afraid of birds of all shape and sizes. (ChS,20)  
b. Il Signor Mason rimase il tempo necessario a spiegare ai Dursley che sua moglie aveva un terrore mortale degli uccelli di ogni forma e dimensione. (CS, 21)

In comparing (64a) and (65a), it can be immediately noted that the verb “tell” requires the mandatory presence of the receiver (the individual to whom the speech is addressed) in a post-verbal position. This is due to the fact that it is a transitive verb, therefore it must assign accusative case. In contrast, the verb “to

say” in (64a) does not show the presence of the receiver, which is optional. This element may be expressed by a preposition phrase if the theme is represented by a noun phrase, instead of a finite complement clause, as confirmed by (66a):

- (66) a. He’d have to say something to her. (PhS,11)  
b. Doveva dirle qualcosa. (PF,13)

It can be noted that even in this case the presence of the receiver is not compulsory.

Another difference between the two verbs lies in the fact that “tell” cannot appear in quotative construction, unlike “say” or “ask”.

The verbs described so far, are those that are most frequently used within finite complement clauses, when they represent an indirect speech structure. However, there are also other verbs that may select finite complement clauses:

- (67) a. He promised Harry he would flay him to within an inch of his life when t  
the Masons had left. (ChS,20)  
b. Promise a Harry che lo avrebbe scorticato vivo quando gli ospiti fossero  
andati via. (CS,21)

The verb “promise” (promettere) requires the presence of the individual who makes the promise (the subject) and the individual who receives it. In this regard, it is obvious that the former is the same person who will perform the action described by the promise, contained within the complement clause. For this reason, the verb shown in (67a) and (67b) is named “subject control verb.” Another peculiarity of the two sentences above relates to the use of the complementizer. In this respect, the comparison between the above mentioned examples highlights a contrast between the two languages, since this component is absent in the original version. In fact, English allows for it to be missing in informal speaking and writing, if this element selects an objective complement clause, whether it is a complement of a verb as in (67a) or a complement of an adjective as in (68a):

- (68) a. He wasn't sure the snake could hear him. (PhS,25)  
b. Non era sicuro che il serpente potesse udirlo. (PF,31)

Instead, Italian does not allow the absence of this element because it must be always expressed, as confirmed by (67b) and (68b), otherwise the sentence is ungrammatical:

- (68) c. \*Promise a Harry quando gli ospiti fossero andati via lo avrebbe scorticato vivo.  
d. \*Non era sicuro il serpente potesse udirlo.

However the complementizer may be omitted in Italian if the complement clause shows a verb expressed by the subjunctive in formal style:

- (69) a. "And I thought I had it bad staying here for another four weeks".  
(ChS,14)  
b. " E pensare che credevo non ci fosse niente di peggio del dover restare qui per altre quattro settimane". (CS,16)

The verb expressed by the Simple Past "credevo", which introduces the finite complement clause, is not followed by the complementizer. Therefore there is a similarity between the two languages since both of them lack the afore mentioned element.

### 3.1.3.2 Non finite complement clauses

Infinite clauses have a null subject which is anaphoric to an argument of the selecting verb. In (70a) the subject of "do" is anaphoric to the object of "remind". The same is the case in Italian (70b), even if "ricordare" does not select a direct object but an indirect (prepositional) one. A perfectly parallel example is found in (71):

- (70) a. “Sometimes they remind **me** to do extra punishments” (ChS,14)  
 b. “ A volte **gli** ricordano di darsi qualche castigo in più” (CS,16)
- (71) a. We would also ask you to remember that any magical activity that risks notice by members of the non-magical community (Muggles) is a serious offence. (ChS,21)  
 b. La preghiamo inoltre di ricordare che qualsiasi attività magica che rischi di essere notate dalla comunità dei non maghi (Babbani), è un reato grave. (CS,22)

English presents the accusative with infinitival construction in which the subject of the infinitival is overt and assigned accusative by the matrix verb (e.g. “want”). Italian does not allow this construction, and selects a finite clause, as in (72b):

- (72) a. “I don’t want him t-t-to come” (PhS,22)  
 b. “N-n- non voglio... che.... venga... pure lui!” (PF,26)

In the example above, the object of the complement clause is expressed and it is represented by the accusative pronoun “him”. Note that it represents the subject of the infinitival clause in the Italian version; moreover it occupies the post-verbal position, due to the presence of the unaccusative verb “venga” expressed in the subjunctive. This data is important because if the two complement clauses are compared, a contrast between the two languages emerges; the verb “to want” always selects an infinitival phrase in English, while this is not possible in Italian:

- (72) c. “\*N-n- non voglio.... ....venire... pure lui!”

More cases of difference between the two languages are found in the following examples, where English only presents the possibility of a finite clause, while Italian prefers the infinitival clause in the case the subject is anaphoric to the subject of the matrix verb:

- (73) a. But he wished he hadn't said anything. (PhS,24)  
 b. si pentì di aver parlato. (PF,29)
- (74) a. Harry thought he heard the voices downstairs falter. (ChS,13)  
 b. Harry credette di sentire le voci di sotto farsi più basse. (CS,15)
- (75) a. He dreamt that he was on show in a zoo. (ChS,23)  
 b. Sognò di essere in mostra in uno zoo. (CS,23)

The comparison shows a situation diametrically opposite to the one analysed before, because in this case it is the English text which shows a finite complement clause. In addition, it has to be noted that the verb “credere” also selects a finite complement clause in Italian (see example n.53b), therefore both kinds of clauses are accepted, while English shows only an infinitival clause. Also note that the latter can also be preceded by rising verbs, contained within the matrix clause:

- (76) a. Albus Dumbledore didn't seem to realize that he had just arrived in a street where everything from his name to his boots was unwelcome. (PhS,12)  
 b. Albus Silente non sembrava rendersi conto di essere appena arrivato in una strada dove tutto, dal suo nome ai suoi stivali, risultava sgradito. (PF,14)

The phrasal argument placed to the right of the matrix verb “seem” is infinitive, consequently the subject cannot be expletive. This is confirmed by the presence of the proper noun in the topic position. In this respect, it should be noted that the above element seems to be “lifted” from the subject position of the infinitival complement clause (Albus Dumbledore ... to realize, Albus Silente ... rendersi conto), to the subject position of the main clause. The same observation is valid for the following sentences:



- (77) a. There seemed to be a lot of strange dressed people about. (PhS,8)  
b. C'erano un sacco di persone vestite in modo strano. (PF,10)

The subject “there” has been moved from the subject position of the complement clause (There, to be a lot of strange dressed people) to the subject of the matrix clause. Note that also in this case the example shows an infinitival complement clause. This type of sentences accept any type of subject in the matrix clause. In fact, in (77a) the subject is expletive, while in (76) it is represented by a proper noun. However, if the rising verbs is followed by a finite clause, the subject of the matrix clause must be expletive, as shown in (78a):

- (78) a. It seemed that Professor McGonagall had reached the point she was most anxious to discuss. (PhS,14)  
b. Sembrava che la Professoressa McGranitt avesse toccato il punto che più le premeva di discutere (PF,16)

This means that subjects which are different to the one illustrated in the English version are not allowed.

The comparative analysis carried out so far, has focused the attention on the verbs selecting an internal argument, made up of noun phrases and complement clauses. The following section, instead, will focus on the verbs without direct objects, starting with the intransitive verbs.

### **3.1.4 Intransitive verbs**

Intransitive verbs are crucially different from transitive ones since the former do not assign accusative case. Consequently the direct object is missing. If they show an element to their right, it is usually represented by a preposition phrase, as shown by the next couple of sentences:

- (79) a. Harry felt into an uneasy sleep. (ChS,23)  
b. Harry cadde in un sonno agitato. (CS,23)

Also note that even some transitive verbs may be transformed into intransitive ones:

- (80) a. They ate in the zoo restaurant. (PhS,24)  
b. Pranzarono al ristorante dello zoo. (PF,30)

Usually, the verb “eat” has a transitive value, because it is used to specify what has been eaten, so it is followed by a noun phrase which is in the internal argument. Instead, in (80), it is followed by a preposition phrase, therefore the verb has only the function of showing where the event takes place. Also note that in some cases intransitive verbs may show a direct object in Italian, occurring in common expressions such as “piangere lacrime amare, dormire sonni tranquilli”. This phenomenon is not allowed in English since it is not possible to find phrases such as “\*to sleep quiet sleeps”. Another contrast between the two languages is represented by the fact that some English intransitive verbs correspond to transitive verbs in Italian:

- (81) a. Dudley and Piers sniggered. (PhS,24)  
b. Dudley e Piers repressero una risata. (PF,29)

- (82) a. Harry stared. (PhS,25)  
b. Harry lo fissò stupito. (PF,31)

Consequently, in this case there is a situation which is diametrically opposite to the one analysed in the paragraph dedicated to the transitive verbs, because in this case it is the Italian version which shows a transitive verb, not the original version.

Now consider the following sentences:

- (83) a. Harry looked intently at the snake. (PhS,25)  
b. Harry guardò intensamente il serpente. (PF,30)

The verb in (83a) is apparently transitive; this statement seems to be confirmed by the fact that it has two arguments, the agent (Harry) and the theme (the snake). In reality, it is an intransitive verb composed of a preposition, “at” which selects the noun phrase. The absence of this particle does not allow the verb to be followed by a noun phrase:

(83) c. \*Harry looked intently the snake.

The ungrammaticality of (83c) shows that the preposition is a part of the verb, which belongs to the category of the phrasal verbs, a topic which will be dealt with in the next paragraph 3.1.5

#### **3.1.4.1 Unaccusative verbs**

As noted, the unaccusative verbs present a peculiar particularity because they cause the movement of the subject to a post-verbal position in Italian (in this respect, see chapter 2, paragraph 2.1). In addition, they show some common characteristics with transitive verbs. In this regard, consider the following examples:

(84) a. When Dudley had been put to bed, he went into the living-room.  
(PhS,10)

b. Una volta messo a letto Dudley, se ne andò in soggiorno. (PF,12)

(85) a. They finished lunch and went outside in the cast court yard. (ChS,82)

b. Terminato il pranzo, uscirono in cortile. (CS,126)

In comparing the sentences, it can be noted that the Italian version has the same structure in (84b) and (85b); in the first case the subject of the sentence, Dudley, occupies the post-verbal position, since it is preceded by the past participle of the verb. With regard to (85b), the element that is found after the verb is not represented by the subject, but by the object. In fact, the sentence (85b) corresponds to “il pranzo è terminato”. As far as the verb is concerned, it may be

easily understood that it is unaccusative since it indicated a change of state, the end of the event. Based on what has been mentioned so far, there is a parallelism between the subject of the transitive verbs and the object of the unaccusative verbs, since both can be positioned after the past participle verb. A further correspondence between them is noted in the following examples:

- (86) a. And from behind the six huge figures before them, come a seventh, smaller boy. (ChS,95)  
b. E da dietro ai sei possenti personaggi che fronteggiavano la squadra dei Grifondoro ne comparve un settimo: era una ragazzo mingherlino. (CS,102)
- (87) a. He found a pair under his bed. (PhS,20)  
b. Ne trovò un paio sotto al letto. (PF,24)

Both clauses taken from the Italian version are characterized by the presence of the clitic “ne”. This element has an anaphoric function. This is confirmed by the fact that (86b) refers to the subject of the unaccusative verb “comparve”, while (87b) makes reference to the object of the transitive verb “trovare”. This suggests, therefore, that the subject of transitive verbs and the object of intransitive verbs may be both pronominalized by using the afore mentioned clitic. Consequently, even in this case the analysis has highlighted a parallelism between the two verbs.

### **3.1.5 Phrasal verbs**

Phrasal verbs are characterized by the presence of a particle, which can be constituted either by a preposition, as for example “after, for, at” or by an adverb like “out, up”. This information is very important, because, according to it, phrasal verbs may be distinguished into two categories, such as prepositional verbs and particle verbs. This distinction also has an effect on the syntactic point of view, as the former must always be followed by a noun phrase, as evidenced by (88a), while the latter do not usually select by any complement noun, as (88b) shows:

- (88) a. “I want you to look after the bacon”. (PhS,19)  
b. “He yawned and turned over” (PhS,12)

However, in some cases particle verbs may be transitive, therefore they show a noun complement to their right:

- (89) At half past eight, Mr. Dursley picked up his briefcase. (PhS,8)

Also note that the noun complement can also be found between the verb and the adverb particle:

- (90) After pulling a spider off one of them, put them on. (PhS,21)

This distribution is not permitted by prepositional verbs because the noun phrase always has to follow the prepositions. Any shift in position prior to it would make the sentence ungrammatical:

- (91) a. “\*I want you to look the bacon after”

In addition, if the noun complement is represented by a pronoun, as shown in (90) (them), it must precede the particle, not follow it; otherwise the construction would be incorrect (\*put on them). Another way that enables the two classes of phrasal verbs to be distinguished is constituted by a test of coordination. In this regard, the following example highlights further differences between preposition and particle verbs:

- (92) “If you try and magic yourself out, they’ll expel you” (ChS,21)

In the example illustrated above, the adverbial particle “out” appears only once in the sentence, as it cannot be repeated, while it is possible in a prepositional verb; in fact the subsequent sentence is not considered ungrammatical:

(93) Susy took after her mother and after her grandmother.

Prepositional verbs also show another peculiarity, known as preposition stranding, where the object of the preposition is moved from its canonical position, leaving the preposition in its place:

(94) He had found what he was looking for. (PhS,12)

In this case the preposition complement has been transformed into an interrogative phrase (what). This phenomenon also occurs in the presence of the predicative adjectives when they contain a preposition within:

(95) “They’re a kind of Muggle sweet I’m rather fond of” (PhS,13)

### **3.1.6 Weather verbs**

Weather verbs are intransitive verbs that refer to environmental conditions:

(96) a. It started to rain. (PhS,32)  
b. Cominciò a piovere. (PF,34)

(97) a. It was a very sunny Saturday. (PhS,24)  
b. Era un sabato assolato. (PF,29)

This function is accomplished with the use of the verb in the third person singular, as illustrated by the examples above. These verbs are generally labelled “impersonal verbs” since they do not refer to any entity in the discourse. This statement is confirmed by the fact that the subject is necessarily null in Italian, while the English version shows the expletive pronoun “it”, only to fill the subject position:

(98) c. \*Esso cominciò a piovere.

This syntactic structure is also used in order to make reference to the days of the week and to indicate the time:

- (99) a. It is Monday. (PhS,32)  
b. E' Lunedì. (PF,34)

- (100) a. It was nearly midnight. (PhS,12)  
b. Era quasi mezzanotte. (PF,15)

The sentences analysed so far highlight no differences between the English and Italian versions since they both use the verb “to be” (essere) in the singular. In this respect, it is noted that Italian also allows for the possibility to use the verb “fare” to indicate the temperature, while English shows only the verb “to be”:

- (101) a. It was very cold outside the car. (PhS,33)  
b. Fuori dalla macchina faceva molto freddo. (PF,36)

This suggests then, that Italian has a slightly wider range of expressions, therefore there is not always a perfect parallelism between the two languages. Also the following pairs highlight an inequality between them:

- (102) a. In what seemed like no time, it was five minutes to eight. (ChS,103)  
b. In men che non si dica furono le otto meno cinque. (CS,109)

Italian uses a plural verb in presence of time, unlike English. The only exception is represented in (100b) where the Italian version shows the verb “essere” in the singular. In this case, the verb is always required to be singular before times such as “mezzanotte, mezzogiorno, l’una”.

### **3.2 Functional verbs**

The analysis so far has focused on lexical verbs which are provided with their own argument structure. This characteristic differentiates them from the

functional verbs, because the latter are deprived of an argument structure, thus they do not have a descriptive content. For this reason, they combine with lexical verbs to form a single mono-clausal structure with the ability to specify the described event. This category includes modal verbs, causative verbs, perception verbs and motion verbs, a topic which will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

### 3.2.1 Modal verbs

Modal verbs have many functions within communication; they are used to make hypothesis, to ask for permission to do something, to give advice, orders and to give restrictions. In this respect, there are two distinct uses from the semantic point of view, that is the epistemic and the deontic modality. The first one indicates the attitude of the speaker towards the value of truth in a proposition, understood as true or possible. Consequently he makes hypothesis, therefore it is a subjective point of view. One may also note that hypothesis may be also referred to a context which is external to the speaker, as the following pairs underline:

- (103) a. It must have been a trick of the light. (PhS,8)  
b. La luce doveva avergli giocato qualche brutto tiro. (PF,10)

- (104) a. It must have made sense to Dumbledore. (PhS,15)  
b. Evidentemente Silente lo sapeva leggere. (PF,17)

Both sentences taken from the original English version show the modal verb “must”, usually used to give orders, followed by the present perfect. In this case it is used as an assumption made by the narrator and not of the character, since the discourse is not contained within the quotation marks.

With regard to the deontic modality, consider the next example:

- (105) a. “This makes the Dursleys sound almost human. Can’t anyone help you? Can’t I?” (ChS,15)  
b. “A sentire te i Dursley mi sembrano quasi umani. Non c’è nessuno che possa aiutarti? Non posso aiutarti io?” (CS,16)



The character who says the phrase contained within the quote asks for permission to do what is described. This is confirmed by the presence of the modal verb “Can’t” (“Posso”) expressed in the short negative form at the end of the sentence in (105a). It is usually used to obtain the permission to do something in an informal context. Consequently in this case the source of authority is represented by the interlocutor, while in the affirmative phrase it is represented by the speaker:

- (106) a. “Harry Potter must say he’s not going back to school” (ChS,19)  
b. “Harry Potter deve dire che non tornerà a scuola” (CS,21)

If the source of authority derives from an external context the deontic modality becomes objective:

- (107) a. Harry knew he ought to feel sorry that Mrs Figg had broken her leg, but it wasn’t easy. (PhS,22)  
b. Harry sapeva che avrebbe dovuto dispiacersi per il fatto che la Signora Figg si era rotta la gamba, ma non gli fu facile. (PF,26)

The modal verb “ought to” in (107a), indicates a duty, like “must”. However there is a slight difference between them, since the latter is used to make reference to a duty imposed by an authority, while the former refers to a moral duty, imposed by an external context, like the one shown in the above mentioned sentence. From the syntactic point of view, “ought to” represents the only modal verb that is followed by the infinitival inflection “to”, while all the other verbs are in the base form. In addition, they can only be used in the present or simple past:

- (108) a. “She can’t take him” (PhS,21)  
b. Harry couldn’t see any way out of his situation. (ChS,22)

Finally, these verbs are compatible with all kind of subjects, since they do not assign them any thematic role.

### 3.2.2 Causative verbs

Causative verbs give the subject a thematic role of agent or cause of the described event. English has two types of causative verbs, “let” and “make”, which corresponds to the Italian “lasciare” and “fare”. Consider the following examples:

- (109) a. “Don’t you dare let it burn” (PhS,23)  
b. “E non ti azzardare a farlo bruciare” (PF,23)
- (110) a. “Make it move!” he whined at his father (PhS,25)  
b. “Fallo muovere” chiese piagnucolando al padre. (PF,30)

In (109a) the subject represents the agent of the action described by the lexical verb, while in (110a) is the cause, as it is responsible for the movement of the object, (represented by the complement pronoun “it”, rendered in Italian as the clitic “lo”.) In this regard, it can be noted that these elements occupy a different position in the two languages; the pronoun “it” is always found between the causative and the lexical verb in English, therefore its position is fixed. As regard Italian, the clitic illustrated above is included in the causative verb (**farlo**, **fallo**). The presence of this element is compulsory and strictly linked to the argument structure of the lexical verb; in this regard, if it selects only one argument, the subject receives accusative case, a function performed by the clitic “lo”. In addition, it has to be noted that it may be also found before the causative verb in Italian, as (111b) shows:

- (111) a. “I expect they’ve let it rot to give it a stronger flavour”, said Hermione knowledgeably. (ChS,112)  
b. “Immagino che **lo** abbiano fatto andare a male per renderlo più saporito” commentò Hermione con aria saccente. (CS,122)

Moreover, if the lexical verb shows more than an argument, its subject receives dative case, as in (112b):

- (112) a. “One more sound and you’ll wish you’d never been born boy” (ChS,18)  
b. “Ancora un rumore e ti faccio pentire di essere nato!” (CS,19)

This is due to the presence of the infinitival complement clause, located to the right of the lexical verb “pentire”.

From a syntactic point of view, English causative verbs seemingly have a similar structure to the non finite control verbs; in this regard compare (113a) and (113b):

- (113) a. She let Harry watch TV. (PhS,28)  
b. “I want to read that letter” (PhS,31)

From the analysis of the above examples, a difference between the two constructions can be noted; the verb that introduces the infinitival complement clause shows the infinitival inflection “to”, which is absent in front of the lexical verb in (113a).

### **3.2.3 Perception verbs**

Perception verbs assign the subject the thematic role of the experiencer of the event described by the lexical verb. Regarding the construction in which these verbs are contained, consider the following pair:

- (114) a. Two seconds later, Harry heard Uncle Vernon coming into the hall.  
(ChS,17)  
b. Un attimo dopo, Harry udì Zio Vernon andare nell’ingresso. (CS,19)

Usually causative verbs in English present the lexical verb in the “-ing form” with a progressive interpretation, as shown in (114a), while Italian has an infinitive, illustrated in (114b), but it can also present a pseudo-relative, shown in (115b), located before the quotation marks:

- (115) a. From the dining room he heard Uncle Vernon saying: "Tell Petunia that very funny story about those American plumbers, Mr. Mason. She's been dying to hear.. (ChS,19)
- b. Dal salotto udiva la voce di Zio Vernon che diceva: "Racconti a Petunia quella buffissima storiella degli idraulici americani... Lei muore dalla voglia di sentirla.." (CS,20)

Also note that the lexical verb can appear in the base form in English, without the infinitival inflection:

- (116) a. Harry run up the hall into the kitchen and felt his stomach disappear. (ChS,19)
- b. Harry corse in cucina e il cuore gli si fermò. (CS,20)

In this case it has a syntactic structure similar to that of the causative verbs analysed before, given that they also showed the lexical verb without this element.

### **3.2.3 Motion verbs**

Motion verbs have an agentive subject and are used to indicate movement in space. Generally "to go" and "to come" ("andare" e "venire") are the verbs that appear most frequently within the sentences:

- (117) a. After lunch they went to the reptile house. (PhS,25)
- b. Dopo pranzo, andarono al serpentario. (PF,30)
- (118) a. "I've come to bring Harry to his aunt and uncle". (PhS,15)
- b. "Sono venuto a portare Harry dai suoi zii." (PF,17)

The verb "go" indicates the action of moving from one place to another; in fact, it is usually followed by a preposition phrase that specifies the destination. Also the verb "come" expresses a movement, but in this case it refers to the action of going where another individual is, as shown in (118a) and (118b). Also note that motion

verbs are usually followed by the infinitival inflection in English; in this case the syntactic construction indicates that the action has been done by the character for a purpose, and that it has already been accomplished. However, in some cases the motion verb is linked to the lexical verb by coordination:

- (119) a. “We may as well go **and** join the celebrations!” (PhS,17)  
b. “Tanto vale che andiamo a prender parte ai festeggiamenti”. (PF,18)

This syntactic structure gives rise to a different interpretation of the event described; in (118a) the action has been accomplished, while in (119a) it still has not yet been accomplished.

Also note that this kind of verbs can be used with non-human subjects. In this case they assume a reference that is different from the one they are normally used. In this regard, consider the following examples:

- (120) a. The way things were going, he’d probably starve to death anyway.  
(ChS,22)  
b. Per come stavano andando le cose probabilmente lui sarebbe morto comunque: di fame. (CS,23)

The motion verb used in the progressive form in both languages presents an inanimate subject. This suggests, therefore, that it cannot perform materially the action described by the verb, which in this case has only the function of indicating the trend of the situation. Furthermore, the verb “andare” can also constitute a fixed expression, used in common language, such as “andare a monte, andare a male (esempio 111b)” as well as in a higher stylistic register (121b). Also the verb “venire” may be used in different contexts (122b). In this case the verb “veniva” means “venire in mente”, therefore it is not referred to a place or direction from which someone or something came.

- (121) a. The dish shattered. (ChS,19)  
b. Il piatto andò in frantumi. (CS,21)

- (122) a. Sometimes, when he strained his memory during long hours in his cupboard, he came up with a strange vision. (PhS,27)  
b. Talvolta, quando sforzava la memoria durante le lunghe ore trascorse nel suo ripostiglio, gli veniva una strana visione. (PF,32)

Moreover, it may also refer to the act of discovering something as (123b) highlights:

- (123) a. If it did... if it got out that they were related to a pair of – well, he didn't think he could bear it. (PhS,11)  
b. Se sì... cioè, se veniva fuori che loro erano parenti di una coppia di...be', non credeva proprio di poterlo sopportare. (PF,11)

Another verb of motion that may have a different meaning is illustrated in the next pair:

- (124) a. Nearly ten years had passed. (PhS,19)  
b. Erano passati quasi dieci anni. (PF,22)

The verb in (124a–b) indicates the elapsing of time, while usually it is used to express an action based on movement (e.g.: *passare a prendere*). Another peculiarity of motion verbs is given by the fact that they can combine with a direction adverb forming a phrasal verb. This is also true for English, as demonstrated in the following examples:

- (125) a. He shuffled away. (PhS,25)  
b. E corse via. (PF,30)

In both cases, it can be noted that the motion verb combines with the adverbial particle “away” in (125a) and “via” in (125b).

### **3.3 Conclusions**

The analysis carried out in this chapter did not find any specific contrasts between the two languages; the only differences highlighted concerned the argument structure of some verbs, since they may be transitive in English and intransitive in Italian, or vice versa. Another difference between the languages is related to the verbs that select complement clauses; in this regard the comparative analysis has demonstrated that not all verbs may select a finite complement clause in English, as is the case in Italian. In some cases, however, the opposite situation occurred, hence there is a sort of compensation between the two languages. The choice to focus on the verb phrase is justified by the fact that it is the most important element within the sentence for reasons described in the introduction of this chapter. The presence or absence of the direct object and subject depends on it. These two elements may be represented by a clause, as well as a proper name, concrete or abstract. In this case they form a noun phrase, whose composition will be analysed in the subsequent chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE NOUN PHRASE AND ITS CONSTITUENTS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This section will focus on the internal structure of the noun phrase, with particular reference to the use and distribution of the internal constituents (articles, quantifiers, demonstratives, possessives and adjectives). As above, I will highlight similarities and differences between English and Italian. Afterward the comparative analysis, I will point out some cases of attrition in the Italian translation, related to the position of possessive and descriptive adjectives. Finally the attention will be focused on some particular constructions where the English adjectives show an atypical behaviour, thus giving rise to a perfect parallelism with Italian.

#### **4.1 The noun as the head of the noun phrase**

The previous chapter focused on the position of the subject; this element can be represented by a proper noun (e.g.: Harry), as well as by an abstract or concrete noun, definite or indefinite that combines with other elements (e.g.: articles, possessives, adjectives, etc.) thus forming a noun phrase, of which it represents the most important constituent, the “head”. In this regard, the noun that composes it can be “single”, if it consists of only one word, but it can be also formed by two words; in this case it becomes a “compound” noun, analysed in the following paragraph.

##### **4.1.1 Compound nouns**

Compound nouns such as “living room” (see example 12a) derive from the combination of two words; the first one, found to the right represents the most important element, the “head” of the compound because it determines both its reference and the grammatical category. In this respect, the head may be a noun, as above, or an adjective (e.g.: nationwide).

The word found to the left represents the modifier, which restricts the reference of the compound. As seen in the first chapter, this construction is far more



productive in the Germanic languages than in the Romantic ones. This statement can be confirmed by the following examples:

(126) a. The Dursleys had received a very angry letter from Harry's headmistress.  
(PhS,23)

b. I Dursley avevano ricevuto una lettera molto indignata della direttrice.  
(PF,28)

(127) a. He was ripping the paper off a gold wristwatch when Aunt Petunia came back from the telephone looking both angry and worried. (PhS,21)

b. Stava strappando l'incarto di un orologio da polso d'oro, quando Zia Petunia tornò nella stanza con l'aria arrabbiata e preoccupata a un tempo. (PF,25)

The comparison highlights that in the Italian translation it is not possible to find a compound which corresponds to those present in (126a) and (127a); in the first case the compound noun *headmistress* is translated with a derived noun "direttrice", while in the subsequent example, the Italian version shows a noun phrase in which the nominal modifier "wrist" is expressed by a preposition phrase (orologio da polso). This witness the low productivity of compounding in Italian, opposed to the high productivity in English. In this regard, the attention will now be focused on the analysis of the words that compose them. The compound shown in (126a) is formed by two nouns: head and mistress. The latter which represents the head, refers to a woman, who can be intended as a lover, but also as a teacher, mistress. Consequently, she is found at the head of a scholastic organization, a concept expressed by the name "head", located on the left of the compound. This shows that the compound noun has the same reference of the words which compose it, therefore it is an endocentric nominal compound. The same is true for the second compound present in (127a), which is formed by two nouns, "wrist", and "watch", located on the right. By linking the two words together it can be easily understood that the object is a watch, because it is always placed on the wrist. This suggests that even in this case the compound has the same reference of

the two words which compose it. The category of compound illustrated so far, differs from the one illustrated below. In this regard consider the following examples:

- (128) a. Harry lay in his dark cupboard, much later, wishing he had a watch.  
(PhS,27)
- b. Molto più tardi, Harry, steso al buio nel suo ripostiglio, avrebbe desiderato avere un orologio. (PF,32)

*Cupboard* in (128a) is formed by two nouns: the first on the right refers to a board, or plank, while the second indicates a cup. Consequently, the combination of the two words makes one think of a tray where cups are placed, but in reality the compound does not have this meaning. In fact, in the Italian version, the word is translated with “ripostiglio”, which is a small room where objects such as broom are stored. This means that the compound found in the original version has a completely autonomous reference with respect to the words that compose it. This is what is called an exocentric nominal compound. Also note that nouns, either compound or single, can be singular or plural, therefore they can be countable, but also uncountable in some cases. This topic will be dealt with in the subsequent paragraph.

#### **4.1.2 Countable and uncountable nouns**

Generally, the majority of nouns are countable because they can be both singular and plural, therefore they can be quantified. However there may be exceptions to that rule, since not all nouns show the afore-mentioned feature; this statement is supported by the fact that they cannot be transformed into the plural, as the following pairs highlight:

- (129) a. Cream splattered the windows and walls. (ChS,19)
- b. La panna imbrattò finestre e muri. (CS,21)

The noun placed at the beginning of the main clause represents an indefinite quantity, therefore it cannot be plural. This is true both for English and Italian (\*Creams, \*Panne). Moreover, it does not allow the presence of the indefinite article before it, since the result would be ungrammatical (\*a cream, \*una panna.). Consequently, according to what has been mentioned so far, both languages show an uncountable noun because it cannot be quantified. In this case the analysis has highlighted a similarity between English and Italian. However, it is not always possible to have a perfect correspondence between the languages, as the following example shows:

- (130) a. Next morning, however, he has got up to find his hair exactly as it had been before Aunt Petunia sheared it off. (PhS,23)  
b. Ma la mattina dopo, aveva trovato i capelli esattamente come erano prima che zia Petunia glieli avesse rapati. (PF,28)

From the comparison it can be noticed that the noun “hair” in (130a) does not have the morpheme “-s”, which shows the plural form (\*hairs). In addition, it does not allow the indefinite article to be placed before it (\*a hair), therefore it is an uncountable noun; this is also confirmed by the presence of the subject pronoun (it) found between the verb and the particle “off”. This element is always referred to singular nouns. As far as the Italian version is concerned, the situation is totally different; the noun “capelli” is plural, since it shows the morpheme “-i” at the end. Consequently, it is a countable noun, since it can be quantified; in fact it is also possible to say “un capello” since the insertion of the indefinite article is allowed.

Another contrast between the two languages is represented by the subsequent sentences:

- (131) a. “Bad news, Vernon” she said. (PhS,21)  
b. “Cattive notizie, Vernon” disse. (PF,25)

Despite the presence of the consonant “s”, the noun “news in (131a) is always singular in English, while it can be both singular and plural in Italian (notizia, notizie). Consequently, according to what has been mentioned so far, not all nouns can be considered as countable in English. In order to verify to what category they belong to, a test can be applied; it consists in placing the indefinite article before them. If the result is ungrammatical, it means that they are uncountable, otherwise they are countable nouns.

#### **4.1.3 Event nouns**

The description of an action or an event is usually performed by the verb phrase. However, in some cases it is also possible to find a noun phrase performing the above mentioned function. For this reason it is named “event noun”, highlighted in the following pairs:

- (132) a. If there was one thing the Dursley hated even more than his asking questions, it was his talking about anything acting in a way it shouldn't. (PhS,24)
- b. Se c'era una cosa che i Dursley odiavano ancor più delle sue domande era il sentirlo parlare di cose che non si comportavano come dovevano. (PF,29)

In (132a) there are two noun phrases characterised by a very particular feature, since the possessive adjective “his” is not followed by a noun, but by a verb, showing the “-ing “ form, that describes the action done by the character. This syntactic construction is typical of event nouns; in this regard, it can be noticed that they may be also introduced by the genitive (e.g.: Harry's talking about.) As far as the Italian version is concerned, the situation is different; firstly, the verb cannot be expressed by the progressive form, but it must be infinitive as is shown in (132b). In addition, the event noun is always introduced by the definite article. Moreover, the reference to the individual who performs the action, that is the subject of the lexical verb “parlare”, is realized by the presence of the accusative

clitic “lo”, included in the infinitive verb (sentirlo). This construction is not allowed in English, since the sentence would be ungrammatical

(133) c. \*it was the hear talk him.

The examples so far have highlighted some particular features of nouns. Now the attention will be focused on the elements that introduce them; in this regard it can be noticed that nouns are never alone in the noun phrase. For instance, the noun is preceded by a possessive adjective in (132a) and by a definite article in (132b), while in (131a) it is introduced by an adjective in both languages. As well as quantifiers and demonstratives, these elements represent an integral part of the noun phrase. For this reason, they are called constituents, and according to the syntactic role they have, they are divided into two categories: as for the adjectives, they have the function of attributing a quality or characteristic to the noun, as shown by the sentences below:

(134) a. Don't ask questions: that was the first rule for a quiet life with the Durleys. (PhS,20)

b. Non fare domande: questa era la prima regola per vivere una vita tranquilla con i Dursley. (PF,24)

(135) a. Aunt Petunia's high false laugh sounded from the living room. (ChS,13)

b. Dal salotto risuonò la risata stridula e falsa di Zia Petunia. (CS,14)

Adjectives have lexical content; this means that according to the meaning they have, the quality assigned to the noun can change radically, as shown in the examples illustrated above, since it can be positive or negative. Consequently, these elements belong to a lexical category; vice versa, the possessive pronoun has a different function, since its presence identifies the owner of an object (masculine or feminine, singular or plural) without modifying what is described in the sentence. The same is true for articles, quantifiers and demonstratives; for this reason they are labelled as determiners and will be analysed in the following paragraph.

#### 4.2 Word order within the noun phrase: determiners

Determiners have a role which is totally different from the adjectives seen above, since the formers have only the function of identifying the name by adding syntactic information to it. This statement may be better explained by the next example:

(136) a. Harry and Uncle Vernon watched Dudley unwrap **the** racing bike.  
(PhS,21)

b. Harry e zio Vernon rimasero a guardare Dudley scartare **la** bicicletta da corsa. (PF,25)

(137) a. Exactly why Dudley wanted **a** racing bike was a mistery to Harry.  
(PhS,20)

b. Il motivo preciso per cui Dudley voleva **una** bici da corsa era un mistero per Harry. (PF,23)

The sentence is introduced by a definite article in (136) and by an indefinite one in (137). From the comparison it can be noted that “the choice of the versus a in 136 does not give rise to a change in the state of affairs depicted by the sentence. Rather, the choice of the definite article means that the referent of “the racing bike” (la bicicletta da corsa) is already known in the discourse whereas the referent of “a racing bike” (“una bici da corsa”) is newly introduced . Consequently, according to what has been mentioned so far, determiners have functional content. As far as quantifiers are concerned, they are used to indicate the amount of the noun phrase to which they relate, and the demonstratives indicate whether the noun is near or far away from the speaker. Therefore they help to define the noun, without altering the content described in the sentence.

The use of these elements may vary depending on the language. In this respect, the comparative analysis has found many similarities between English and Italian, as well as some contrasts regarding the use of articles, illustrated below.

#### 4.2.1 Articles

There exists many types of articles in English: the definite article “the”, the single indefinite article “a/an” with an undefined value, zero article with a plural and generic indefinite value and the article “the” with a singular generic value.

##### 4.2.2.1 Definite article

Unlike Italian, English has only one definite article, “the”, which is used to refer to a specific noun, as the following examples demonstrate:

- (138) a. Three days later, the Dursleys were showing no sign of relenting.  
(ChS,22)
- b. Tre giorni dopo i Dursley non davano segno di allentare la guardia.  
(CS,23)

From the comparison it can be noted that the two versions show the definite article before the surname; the presence of this element is compulsory in both languages because it refers to members of a “specific” family, thus distinguishing them from others. Also note that in the original version the surname has the morpheme “-s” indicating that it is plural and refers to the members of the unit family. This is due to the fact that the article “the” does not accord with display gender or numbers, unlike Italian, which shows several definite articles, used to refer to masculine and feminine nouns, that can be singular and plural.

A further example of parallelism between English and Italian is shown in (139):

- (139) a. Only the photographs on the mantelpiece really showed how much time had passed. (PhS,19)
- b. Soltanto le fotografie sulla mensola del caminetto denotavano quanto tempo fosse passato in realtà. (PF, 22)

The noun phrase present at the beginning of the sentence is preceded by the definite article in both versions, because it has definite specific reference since the noun represents an element known in the discourse. This is confirmed by the

presence of the locative complement, expressed by the preposition phrase (on the mantelpiece / sulla mensola del caminetto). Consequently it represents a “definite” description. In this case, both languages require the compulsory presence of article, which in addition to the functions illustrated so far, can also have an anaphoric reference. The sentences listed below show a noun phrase in the subordinate clause, located on the right of the verb; the noun heading the phrase is preceded by an indefinite article, since it represents a new element in the discourse, never mentioned before:

- (140) a. Exactly why Dudley wanted a racing bike was a mystery to Harry.  
(PhS,20)
- b. Il motivo preciso per cui Dudley voleva una bici da corsa era un mistero per Harry. (PF,23)

However, it is possible in both English and Italian to refer back to an element introduced earlier in the discourse by resorting to the use of the definite article, as shown in (141):

- (141) a. Harry and Uncle Vernon watched Dudley unwrap the racing bike.  
(PhS,21)
- b. Harry e Zio Vernon rimasero a guardare Dudley scartare la bicicletta da corsa. (PF,25)

In this case the noun included within the noun phrase acquires a definite specific reference, so it becomes a known element. The data analysed so far have not revealed any contrast between the two languages on the use of the definite article, although there are cases where English may allow the omission of this element. In this regard, consider the following examples:

- (142) a. Dobby’s eyes suddenly shone with tears. (ChS,15)
- b. Subito gli occhi di Dobby si riempirono di lacrime. (CS,17)



The noun phrase occupying the subject position in (142a) is a definite description. This is confirmed by the presence of the genitive, a construction which does not require the insertion of the article in English, while in Italian this element must be expressed, as shown by (142b). Its absence would make the sentence ungrammatical:

(142) c. \*Subito occhi di Dobby si riempirono di lacrime.

The next pairs of sentences highlights another case of contrast between the two languages in presence of honorific titles preceding a proper name, such as Mrs Figgs:

(143) a. Every year Harry was left behind with Mrs. Figg. (Phs,22)  
b. Ogni anno Harry rimaneva con la Signora Figg. (PF,25)

In English the presence of the definite article before the honorific title is not necessary, while Italian always requires it, as shown in (143b). According to what has been mentioned so far, English seems to enjoy a greater freedom concerning the use and distribution of the article since it is possible to omit it. Moreover, English also admits the possibility to express only one, as shown in (144a):

(144) a. Cream splattered the windows and walls. (ChS,19)  
b. La panna imbrattò finestre e muri. (CS,21)

The noun phrase found to the right of verb is a coordination of noun phrases. It shows the definite article only before the first member of the coordination in the original version. This is not possible in Italian, where two coordinated noun phrases must have the same structure (144b). Note that lack of article is licensed by the coordinate structure, given that a single plural definite noun could not miss the article:

(144) c. La panna imbrattò finestre.

Notice also that Italian could have the article on both coordinates with no difference in meaning:

(144) d. La panna imbrattò le finestre e i muri.

Therefore English has the possibility to express the definiteness in coordination with a single article, while Italian can either omit or display the article on both coordinated noun phrases.

#### 4.2.2.2. Zero article

English omits the article in presence of plural nouns having generic reference:

(145) a. “Motorbikes don’t fly!” (PhS,24)

b. “Le motociclette non volano!” (PF,29)

From the comparison, it can be noted that the Italian translation has the plural definite article “le” before the plural noun, while the original version lacks it. This is due to the fact that the characteristic expressed in the quotation represents a universal feature, typical of motorbikes, thus understood as a generic class, whose reference is realised in English by the omission of the definite article. This rule also applies to abstract and mass nouns:

(146) a. Fear flooded him. (PhS,9)

b. Fu invaso dalla paura. (PF,8)

A different type of zero article in English is related to indefinite plural countable nouns, such as *people* or indefinite singular uncountable nouns such as *news*:

(147) a. People goggled through the bars at him. (ChS,23)

b. La gente lo guardava stralunata. (CS,23)

- (148) a. “Well, I’ve got news for you boy” said Uncle Vernon (ChS,21)  
b. “Bene, c’è una novità ragazzo” disse Zio Vernon. (CS,22)

From the comparison it is noted that in the original version the article is not placed before abstract and mass nouns. In the latter case, the mass noun “news” has been translated into Italian with an existential construction which shows an indefinite article before the afore mentioned noun, in order to highlight the indefiniteness. This style is typical of the existential construction, as seen in the second chapter. Also note that in Italian it is possible to express indefinite reference with the insertion of partitive articles, as shown by (149b):

- (149) a. There were screams from the dining room. (ChS,19)  
b. Si udirono delle grida provenire dalla sala da pranzo. (CS,21)

The sentences illustrated so far confirm a great difference in the distribution of the definite article in English and Italian, especially in generic plural reference and in indefinite plural countable and singular uncountable, where English must have a zero article, while Italian always require one.

- (150) a. He had not much neck, small, watery blue eyes, and thick, blond hair.  
(PhS,21)  
b. Aveva quasi niente collo, occhi piccolo di un celeste acquoso e folti capelli biondi. (PF,24)

The comparison between (150a) and (150b) underlines a similarity between the two languages since both of them lack the article. This phenomenon may occur also in Italian if the plural nouns represent a sort of list reading, like those illustrated above.

The next example will show a totally different situation from the one illustrated so far:

(151) a. Mr Dursley was the director of a firm called Grunnings, which made drills. (PhS,7)

b. Il Signor Dursley era direttore di una ditta di nome Grunnings che fabbricava trapani. (PF,6)

The main clause contains a predicative expression; this term derives from the fact that it is an integral part of the copula, represented by the verb “be” (essere) expressed by the Simple Past in both languages. This expression assigns a property to the subject, since it provides information about his job. For this reason it is called predicative nominal over the subject. This data is crucial because it also reflects on the presence of the article; in this regard Italian allows for its omission as is shown in (151b), while English always requires it. Therefore, in this case it is the Italian translation that shows a zero article, not the original one. Consequently, this means that sometimes the article may be missing in Italian. The same situation will occur in the next paragraph, where the attention will be focused on the indefinite article.

#### **4.2.2.3 Indefinite article**

The indefinite article “a/an” is used before singular, countable nouns to indicate indefiniteness:

(152) a. Piers was a scrawny boy”. (PhS,22)

b. Piero era un ragazzo tutto pelle e ossa. (PF,27)

This element is also used in presence of descriptions:

(153) a. He had a large, pink face. (PhS,21)

b. Aveva un gran faccione roseo. (PF,24)

The comparison does not highlight any contrast between the two languages since both of them show the indefinite article before the noun; however Italian may allow for its omission, as (154b) shows:

- (154) a. Today he'd rather be back in his cupboard rather than being up here without any letter. (PhS,31)
- b. Oggi avrebbe preferito tornare nel suo ripostiglio piuttosto che essere lassù senza lettere. (PF,29)

From the comparison it is noted that English does not allow the possibility to omit the article; consequently in this case the situation is totally different from that one illustrated in the previous paragraphs, because here it is Italian which shows a greater freedom regarding the use of indefinite article, since it is possible not to express it in the predicative position, as seen above.

#### 4.2.2 Quantifiers

Quantifiers indicate the quantity of the noun phrase to which they relate. In this regard, they are divided into three categories:

- The existential quantifiers such as “some, many, few” and the numerals (one, two, etc.) express a relation of partitivity between the noun phrase which comes after them and the given or implicit totality;
- The universal quantifiers like “both, all” establish “a relation of identity between the variable and the totality”;
- The distributive quantifiers like “each, every” establish “a relation of partitivity between the variable and a totality of elements”.

With regard to the latter, the comparative analysis has found no difference between the two languages:

- (155) a. Every year on Dudley's birthday, his parents took him and a friend out for the day. (PhS,22)
- b. Ogni anno, per il compleanno di Dudley, i genitori portavano lui e un suo amico fuori per tutto il giorno. (PF,25)

Both versions show the distributive quantifier at the beginning of the sentence, followed by a singular noun. Also note that at the end of the sentence there is a

prepositional phrase that includes a universal quantifier in the Italian translation. This element, which is absent in the original version, indicates the totality of the noun to which it refers, and it is always preceded by the definite article in Italian. In the following pairs both languages show the definite article before the universal quantifier; as far as English is concerned, the presence of this element is strictly related to the reference of the noun as previously seen:

- (156) a. Mrs. Figg made him look at the photographs of all the cats she'd ever owned. (PhS,22)  
b. La signora Figg lo costringeva a guardare le fotografie di tutti i gatti che aveva posseduto in vita sua. (PF,26)

In this case the noun does not have a generic reference; the animals mentioned in the discourse represent a specific class since they belong to Mrs Figg, therefore their reference is specific. For this reason the original version shows the article, whose presence is mandatory in Italian.

Also in this case the comparative analysis carried out so far has not shown any contrast between the two languages on the use and distribution of the quantifiers. However, in the following sentences, it will be noted that the universal quantifier can also occupy a discontinuous position in respect to the noun phrase it quantifies as highlighted in (157):

- (157) a. By the time they were all back in Uncle Vernon's car, Dudley was telling them how it had nearly bitten off his leg. (PhS,26)  
b. Fecero appena a tempo a tornare tutti nella macchina di zio Vernon che già Dudley raccontava come il boa gli avesse quasi staccato la gamba a morsi. (PF,32)

In this regard, the Italian version has the quantifier in the post-verbal position, after the infinitive verb "tornare". This is due to the fact that the noun phrase to which it refers represents the subject, that is not expressed in this case (zero subject). As far as the original version is concerned, it can be noted that the

quantifier is found between the auxiliary and the preposition. Therefore even in this case it is located in a position which is not adjacent to the noun phrase. For this reason it is called “floating quantifier” (Haegeman and Guéron, 1999:228).

#### 4.2.3 Demonstratives

Both English and Italian have two pairs of demonstratives: *this/that* (*questo/quello*) for singular nouns and *these/those* (*questi/quelli*) for plural nouns. They have the task to indicate whether the noun they are referred to is close or far away from the speaker. For this reason they represent deictic elements (Haegeman & Guéron, 1999:61), and express a close deixis (*this/these*) or a distant one (*that/those*) for singular and plural nouns. Now consider the following example:

- (158) a. “Dudley! Mr Dursley! Come and look at this snake!” (PhS,26)  
b. “Dudley! Signor Dursley! Venite a vedere questo serpente!” (PF,31)

Both versions show a demonstrative expressing a close deixis (*this/questo*), because the referenced noun is close to the speaker. Therefore, this element contrasts with the demonstrative “that” which, in addition to expressing a distant deixis, may also have an anaphoric reference, as shown by the following pairs:

- (159) a. He lived with the Dursleys almost ten years, ten miserable years, as long as he could remember ever since he’d been a baby and his parents had died in that car crash. (PhS,27)  
b. Viveva con i Dursley da quasi dieci anni, dieci anni di infelicità per quanto poteva ricordare, fin da quando era piccolo e i suoi genitori erano morti in quell’incidente d’auto. (PF, 32)

From the comparison it is noted that the demonstrative present in both versions acts as an anaphora, because it refers to an element already mentioned in the discourse (see example n.29, chapter 2). It is also noted that Italian, in addition to the distant deixis, can also use a deictic proximity having an anaphoric function:

- (160) a. Don't ask questions – That was the rule for a quiet life with the Dursleys. (PhS,20)  
b. Non fare domande: questa era la regola per vivere in pace con i Dursley. (PF,24)

The examples shown so far have revealed a substantial parallelism between English and Italian in the distribution of the demonstratives. However, with regard to the position of possessive and adjectives, the comparative analysis will highlight some contrasts between the two languages, since these elements occupy a different position within the noun phrase, as it will be shown in the next paragraph.

#### **4.2.4 Possessives**

Possessives have the purpose of identifying the possessor of an object. In this regard, in English the morphological form distinguishes possessive pronouns (mine, yours, his, hers, etc.) from the adjectives (my, your, his, her, etc.). As far as the latter are concerned, they are always found to the left of the noun, as evidenced by the pair of sentences below:

- (161) a. Harry had always been small and skinny for his age. (PhS,20)  
b. Harry era sempre stato piccolo e mingherlino per la sua età. (PF,24)

The comparison shows no difference between the two languages because they both show the possessive in the pre-nominal position. Also note that in (158b), the afore mentioned element is preceded by the definite feminine article “la”. Instead, English does not allow this type of construction because possessives are in complementary distribution with the articles, thus they cannot co-occur within the noun phrase:

- (161) c.\* Harry had always been small and skinny for the his age.



This confirms that Italian has a major freedom in the distribution of constituents than English. This characteristic is also reflected in the possessives order, because in addition to occupying the canonical position described above, they can also be located on the right of the noun:

- (162) a. Half an hour later, Harry, who couldn't believe his luck, was sitting in the back of the Dursleys' car with Piers and Dudley, on the way to the zoo for the first time in his life. (PhS,23)  
b. Mezz'ora più tardi, Harry, che non riusciva a credere a tanta fortuna, aveva preso posto sul sedile posteriore della macchina dei Dursley insieme a Piers e a Dudley, diretto allo zoo per la prima volta in vita sua. (PF,27)

The example shows that Italian allows both positions, because the dislocation of the possessive to the right of the noun does not cause ungrammaticality. However, there are some cases known as fixed expressions in which this element must be placed after the noun, as is the case of *colpa sua* in (163b):

- (163) a. "Now what?" said Aunt Petunia, looking furiously at Harry as though he'd planned this. (PhS,22)  
b. "E ora che si fa?" chiese Zia Petunia, guardando furibonda Harry come se fosse stata colpa sua. (PF,26)

In this case the possessive occupies a fixed position, and the dislocation to the right of the noun is not grammatical (\**la sua colpa*).

The following examples show another case of difference between the two languages on the use of this element:

- (164) a. Mrs. Figg had broken her leg. (PhS,22)  
b. La Signora Figg si era rotta la gamba. (PF,26)

The direct object in (164a–b) is represented by a part of the body which belongs to the inalienable possession nouns category. This kind of nouns require the

compulsory presence of the possessor in English, as highlighted by (164a), while it is implicit in Italian. In fact, the noun phrase to the right of the verb is introduced by the definite article in (164b). In addition, the relationship between the possessor and the part of the body is expressed by the reflexive clitic “si” which is found on the verb (*si è rotta*).

Also kinship nouns and objects of personal use belong to the afore mentioned category, therefore even in this case the possessives must be always expressed in English, while in Italian they are absent, as shown by the following sentences:

(165) a. His aunt and uncle hadn't been able to think of anything else to do with him. (PhS,23)

b. Lo zio e la zia non erano riusciti ad inventarsi niente di diverso per lui. (PF,27)

(166) a. "Thank you," said Harry, edging along the wall and sinking into his desk chair, next to Hedwig. (ChS,13)

b. "Grazie" disse Harry, sgattaiolando lungo la parete e sprofondando nella sedia davanti alla scrivania, vicino alla gabbia di Edvige. (CS,14)

Also note that in (165a), despite the presences of two nouns, there is only one possessive because it is a coordination of defined nouns (cf 165a above). Conversely, Italian does not allow the absence of the determinant, represented by the definite article in (165b) because the two nouns shown at the beginning of the sentence are of different genders, masculine and feminine. Consequently, the article has to be inserted, otherwise the second noun would be left without accordance (\*Lo zio e zia).

Also the following sentences show an inalienable possessive noun. However the comparison notes that the possessive is also present in Italian:

- (167) a. About once a week, Uncle Vernon looked over the top of his newspaper and shouted that Harry needed a haircut. (PhS,20)
- b. Circa una volta alla settimana Zio Vernon alzava gli occhi dal suo giornale e urlava che Harry doveva tagliarsi i capelli. (PF,24)

This makes the sentence unnatural, since the owner is usually implicit, as seen above, therefore not expressed (Zio Vernon alzava gli occhi dal giornale). Consequently (167b) could be considered a case of attrition; the translator seems to be influenced by English that needs the presence of the aforementioned element, so she has applied this rule to the Italian version, by putting the possessive before the noun “giornale”. In the pairs of examples that follow there is a further case of syntactic interference between the two languages:

- (168) a. Ron Weasley was outside Harry’s window. (ChS,23)
- b. Fuori della sua finestra c’era Ron Weasley. (CS,24)

The Saxon genitive shown at the end of the sentence in (165a) has been translated into Italian with a possessive; however its presence makes the sentence unnatural, because the noun “finestra” is not considered a personal object. Thus the presence of a possessor is not necessary. For this reason, the absence of such an item would make the sentence more acceptable:

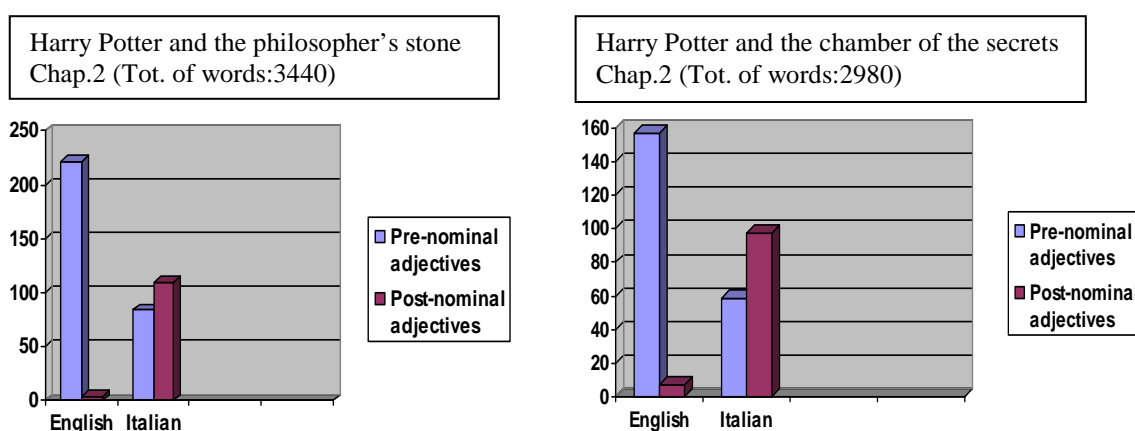
- (169) c. Fuori della finestra c’era Ron Weasley. OK

The comparative analysis carried out so far has initially shown a greater difference in the use of definite articles and possessive adjectives in English and. Conversely, we have noticed no specific contrasts between the two languages regarding the use and the distribution of the other determiners, such as quantifiers and demonstratives.

### 4.3 The position of the adjectives: a comparative analysis between English and Italian

The fixed order of the constituents, typical of that language, is also reflected in the placement of adjectives, which represents the topic of this section.

Adjectives, also known as noun phrase modifiers, have the function to assign a characteristic or quality to a name. Therefore they occupy an adjacent position to the latter. In this respect, the comparative analysis has found a crucial difference between the two languages, as shown in the graphs below:



The results highlight a stark contrast between the two languages; the English version highlights a very high percentage of pre-nominal adjectives, while in the Italian version there is the opposite situation. Moreover, it can be noted that there is a greater freedom referred to the collocation of these elements, since they can also be put before the noun in Italian. This is confirmed by a relatively high percentage of pre-nominal adjectives in the Italian version, albeit to a lesser extent than the original one. In this regard, consider the following examples:

- (170) a. Everybody knew that Dudley's gang hated that odd Harry Potter in his baggy clothes and broken glasses. (PhS,27)
- b. Tutti sapevano che la ghenga di Dudley odiava quello strano Harry Potter infagottato nei suoi vestiti smessi e con gli occhiali rotti. (PF,32)

The comparison shows that the adjectives contained in the subordinate clause are all located in the post-nominal position in (170b), except for one, beside the possessive. Also note that the past participle of the verb “to break”/rompere acts as a modifier of the noun phrase because it attributes a characteristic to the noun. Therefore it has an adjectival function.

The sentence (170b) illustrated above shows that the post-nominal position is typical of Italian, since the adjectives are usually found to the right of the noun. Any changes would make the sentence ungrammatical:

(170) c.\*Tutti sapevano che la ghenga di Dudley odiava quello strano infagottato Harry Potter nei suoi smessi vestiti e con gli rotti occhiali.

Consequently this position is canonical, unmarked. However, at the beginning of the subordinate clause there is an adjective in the antecedent position to the noun in both languages, in turn preceded by a demonstrative. In this case there is a perfect parallelism between English and Italian, since they both show a pre-nominal adjective; the example illustrated above confirms that Italian may also allow the non-canonical marked position, to the left of the noun. The dislocation has been done in order to emphasize the characteristics attributed to the noun phrase: Also the next pairs show this phenomenon:

(171) a. Harry noticed that it was wearing what looked like an old pillowcase, with rips for arm and leg-holes. (ChS,12)  
b. Harry notò che indossava qualcosa di simile ad una vecchia federa, con degli strappi da cui uscivano le braccia e le gambe. (CS,14)

The pre-nominal adjective in (171b) has a descriptive purpose. Also note that the movement of the adjective in its canonical position would not result in an ungrammatical sentence, as the sentence would still make sense, but it would give rise to a different interpretation of the characteristic assigned to the noun:

(171) c. Harry notò che indossava qualcosa di simile ad una federa vecchia, con degli strappi da cui uscivano le braccia e le gambe.

In this case, the post-nominal position has a restrictive function, because it restricts the reference to the noun phrase to which it belongs, by showing the essential characteristics of the noun, thus distinguishing it from the others (una federa vecchia, non nuova/ an old pillowcase, not a new one).

However, sometimes the adjectives occupy a fixed position in Italian as highlighted by (172b):

(172) a. “Bad news, Vernon” she said. (PhS,21)

b. “Cattive notizie, Vernon” disse. (PF,25)

Both versions show the adjective to the left of the noun. In this case, the modifier of the noun phrase cannot be placed after the noun in Italian, otherwise the sentence is unnatural:

(172) c. ? “Notizie cattive, Vernon” disse.

This stems from the fact that the words contained in the quotation represents a fixed expression mostly used in editorial purposes, as noted in (172b), which provide a fixed and non changeable position for the adjective. This also applies to the next example, in which there is an opposite situation to that shown above:

(173) a. “You’ve just ruined the punch line of my Japanese golfer joke” said Uncle Vernon (ChS,18)

b. “Mi hai appena rovinato il finale della barzelletta sul golfista giapponese” disse Zio Vernon (CS,19)

The nationality adjectives always occupy the post-nominal position in Italian, otherwise the sentence is ungrammatical:

- (173) c. \* “Mi hai appena rovinato il finale della barzelletta sul giapponese golfista” disse Zio Vernon

This shows that even if Italian has more freedom in the placement of adjectives, there are certain cases where the dislocation to the right or left of the noun is not permitted, as seen above. Moreover, the pre-nominal position, although permitted, is not always accepted as it can give rise to an unnatural sentence, as shown by (174b):

- (174) a. Dudley and Piers wanted to see huge, poisonous cobras and thick, man-crushing pythons. (PhS,25)  
b. Dudley e Piers volevano vedere i giganteschi e velenosi cobra e i grossi pitoni capaci di stritolare un uomo. (PF,30)

From the comparison, it is noted that there is an outward similarity between the two languages since both of them show the adjectives before the nouns. However the sentence presents a redundant style in the Italian version. This is due to the fact that the noun phrase modifiers occupy an inappropriate position. The translator seems to be influenced by English that shows the adjectives exclusively to the left of the noun. Therefore this rule has been inadvertently applied to the Italian translation, thus giving rise to a unnatural sentence; in fact the adjectives should have been placed to the right of the noun:

- (174) c. Dudley e Piers volevano vedere i cobra giganteschi e velenosi e i pitoni grossi, capaci di stritolare un uomo.

In this case, the translation would have been correct. Also note that in the original version there is a “compound” adjective, formed by a noun and separated from the verb in the “ing” form by a hyphen; it is a deverbal adjective that derives from the verb “to crush” (*schacciare*). This construction is very productive in English, as the following examples show:

- (175) a. The smiling lady in the van had asked Harry what he wanted before they could hurry him away. (PhS,24)
- b. La sorridente barista del baracchino aveva chiesto a Harry cosa volesse, prima che loro avessero potuto allontanarlo. (PF,29)

The pre-nominal adjective in (175a), characterized by the “ing” form, corresponds to the present participle of the verb “to smile”(sorridere), and it is also present in the Italian version. In this regard it is noted that the above mentioned element occupies the same position in both languages, to the left of the noun. However, this makes the sentence unnatural in (175b) because the adjective should have been located in the post-nominal position:

- (175) c. La barista del baracchino, sorridente, aveva chiesto a Harry cosa volesse, prima che loro avessero potuto allontanarlo.

An alternative could have been realised by using the gerund:

- (175) d. La barista del baracchino, sorridendo, aveva chiesto a Harry cosa volesse, prima che loro avessero potuto allontanarlo. OK

Therefore, also in this case, the translator is influenced by the syntactic structure of English. This statement is confirmed by an example where she had placed the adjective in the correct position, to the right of the noun, as shown in (176b):

- (176) a. There was a flying motorbike in it. (PhS,19)
- b. C'era una motocicletta volante. (PF,23)

The data analysed thus far have highlighted a high number of contrasts between the two languages. In this regard Italian allows the presence of the adjectives both in the canonical position as well as in the marked pre-nominal position, while this movement is not allowed in English, since the adjectives always occupies the same position, to the left of the noun. This seems to confirm the rigidity of the



constituents order, a characteristic typical of the English language. However, there are cases, albeit very limited, where the noun phrase modifier shows an atypical behaviour in English, as the next section will show.

#### **4.4 Particular cases of post-nominal adjectives in English: small clauses and pronominal quantifiers**

The sentences illustrated below show an exception with regard to the position normally occupied by the adjectives in English:

- (177) a. Dobby leaned towards Harry, his eyes wide as headlights. (ChS,15)  
b. Dobby si chinò verso Harry, gli occhi spalancati come fari. (CS,17)

In both versions, it is noted that at the end of the main clause there is a comma, which signals the beginning of the next clause describing the characteristics of the noun phrase to which it refers. In this respect, it is noted that there are some particular features; firstly, the adjective is located after the noun in both languages. Consequently, it occupies an atypical position in English. Secondly, the clause is characterized by the complete absence of the verb, except for the past participle with adjectival function in (177b). This information is crucial because it is the cause of the post-nominal position in (177a); in fact, if the verb represented by the copula “be”, was present, the adjective would have become predicative, so it would have been found after the verb and not to the right of the noun. This is confirmed by the following example:

- (178) a. Dobby’s eyes were wide. (ChS,17)  
b. Gli occhi di Dobby erano spalancati. (CS,18)

This suggests that the main clause in (177) includes another sentence, whose features illustrated above define it as “small clause”. Also note that “it can appear as the complement of with”; ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small\\_clause](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_clause)) as demonstrated in (179b):

- (179) a. He was bearing down on Harry, like a great bulldog, all his teeth bared.  
(ChS,21)  
b. E intanto si chinava sul ragazzo come un enorme mastino, con tutti i denti scoperti. (CS,22)

Also in this case it can be noted that the past participle with an adjectival function occupies a post-nominal position in both languages, due to the absence of the copula.

Another atypical behaviour of the adjective in English is shown in (180a):

- (180) a. “I want everything perfect on Duddy’s birthday”. (PhS,20)  
b. “Voglio che tutto sia perfetto il giorno del compleanno di Duddy”.  
(PF,23)

The post-nominal position of the noun phrase modifier derives from the presence of the pronominal quantifier composed by the suffix “thing”, which allow the presence of a restrictive post-nominal adjective. This construction, very productive in English has been translated into Italian with a universal quantifier, followed in turn by the copula, expressed by the subjunctive, which combine the above element with the adjective, that has a predicative value.

#### **4.5 Conclusions**

The comparative analysis carried out in this section did not initially found any difference between the two languages in the use and distribution of the determiners, except for zero articles more present in English and zero possessors, more present in Italian. Lack of articles has been shown in Italian indefinite predicate noun phrases, while this is mandatory in English. As regards the word order, as expected English has a more fixed order, having adjectives and possessors almost uniquely in pre-nominal position, while Italian allows both positions, with preferences for a post-nominal position for descriptive adjectives, also giving rise to some attrition in the Italian translation from English. At the end of the chapter we have considered some predicate structures that, albeit in very

limited circumstances, may allow for the presence of post-nominal adjectives in English. Consequently, the well-known assumption that the noun phrase modifiers are always to the left of the noun in English is not entirely true because there may also be exceptions to this rule, thus giving rise to a perfect parallelism with Italian.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PARATAXIS VS HYPOTAXIS

#### **5.0 Introduction**

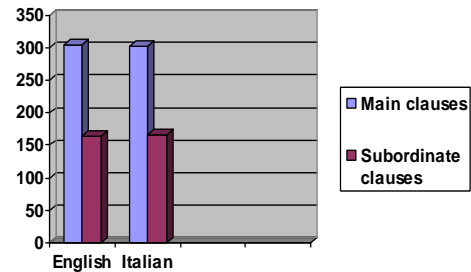
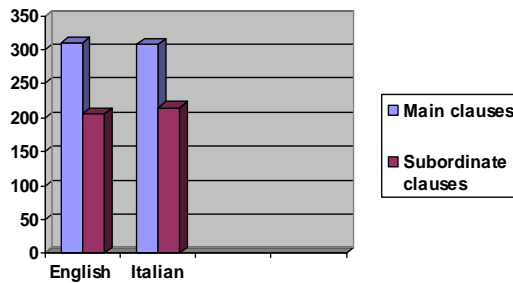
In this section the main structural differences between English and Italian (coordination vs subordination) will be analysed. For this purpose, a quantitative analysis will be carried out, with reference to the number of main and subordinate clauses present in the two versions of the novel. Afterwards a few examples will be examined in order to highlight similarities and differences between the two languages on the presence of subordinate clauses which represent the last topic of the present chapter, with particular reference to the relative clauses. In this regard the relative pronoun distribution in English and Italian will be analysed and compared.

#### **5.1 Main and subordinate clauses: a quantitative and qualitative analysis**

English and Italian are two very different languages. The first belongs to the Germanic language family, while the second belongs to the Romance language family. This difference is crucial, because is also reflected in the structural point of view. In this regard, the English language is considered paratactic, based on coordination, while Italian is hypotactic, therefore it shows a greater number of subordinate clauses. In order to verify the veracity of this postulate, a quantitative analysis has been carried out with reference to the second chapter of the two volumes:

Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone  
Chap.2 (Tot. of words:3440)

Harry Potter and the chamber of the  
secrets Chap.2 (Tot. of words:2980)



The comparison between the graphs seems to contradict what has been mentioned above; the results show very little difference between the two languages since they both have almost the same number of main and subordinate clauses. This is surprising if one considers the previously mentioned assumption, especially with regard to English; according to it, a major difference between the two languages was expected. Therefore, the comparative analysis has shown that it is not entirely true. In this regard, consider the following examples:

- (181) a. Aunt Petunia often said that Dudley looked like a baby angel. (PhS,20)  
 b. Zia Petunia diceva spesso che Dudley sembrava un angioletto. (PF,24)

English and Italian have the same structure, that is, a main clause followed by a subordinate declarative clause, introduced by the complementizer “that”, so there is no difference between the two versions. The next example instead shows an inequality between the two languages:

- (182) a. Don't ask questions: that was the first rule for a quiet life with the Dursleys. (PhS,20)  
 b. Non fare domande: questa era la prima regola per vivere una vita tranquilla, con i Dursley. (PF,24)

From the comparison it can be noted that in (182b) there is a final subordinate clause which is absent in the original version, where there is only a main clause with a preposition phrase placed after the noun phrase “the first rule”), which corresponds to the subordinate clause illustrated in the Italian version. Therefore, in this case the example seems to confirm the fact that Italian presents a greater number of subordinate clauses than English. However, in the following sentences there is a diametrically opposite situation to the one described above:

- (183) a. He jumped the last six steps, landing catlike on the hall carpet, looking around for Dobby. (ChS,19)  
b. Saltò a piè pari gli ultimi sei gradini,atterrò come un gatto sul tappeto dell'ingresso e si guardò intorno in cerca dell'elfo. (CS,20)

In this case, the English version shows two modal subordinate clauses both introduced by the gerund, which are missing in Italian. In fact, in (183b) they have been translated with verb phrase coordination, for asyndeton, highlighted by the presence of the comma, and for polysyndeton indicated by the conjunction “e” within the single main clause. As a result there is compensation between the two languages; this is important because it refutes the popular assumption that English is a paratactic language, because it also has subordinate clauses, which in some cases are absent in the Italian version, as demonstrated by the comparison between (183a) and (183b). In this respect, note also that according to the verb they include, they can be finite or non-finite subordinate clause, as in (182b) and (183a). In this case they have a verb which does not show tense, represented by the infinitive and gerund. In contrast, the declarative subordinate clause present in (181) have both verbs in the simple past. Therefore they contain a verb which shows tense. For this reason they belong to the category of finite subordinate clauses. This distinction also applies to relative clauses. In fact, as will be seen later, English allows for the possibility of having a relative clause introduced by the gerund, as well as the possibility of having a relative pronoun which is phonologically unrealized. Therefore these clauses have special features, whose comparison will reveal some contrasts between English and Italian.

## 5.2 “That” in restrictive and non restrictive relative clauses

The relative clauses can be considered as noun phrase modifiers, like the adjectives; they are introduced by a relative pronoun, explicit or null, which has an anaphoric reference to that phrase. In this respect, it can provide a secondary predication without modifying the reference, or it can provide additional information that help to define better the noun phrase it is referred to as shown below:

- (184) a. The only thing Harry liked about his own appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead which was shaped like a bolt of lightning. (PhS,20)  
b. L'unica cosa che a Harry piaceva del proprio aspetto era una cicatrice molto sottile sulla fronte, che aveva la forma di una saetta. (PF,24)

In the sentences outlined above, there are two relative clauses which gradually restrict the reference of the noun phrase; the first one, placed at the beginning of the sentence in (184a) is characterized by a zero relative pronoun, while the second has an explicit relative pronoun, “which”, used to refer to a non-human noun phrase. The latter, located on the antecedent position of the relative pronoun, constitutes the most important element, the head of the relative clause. According to its reference, definite or indefinite, there are two categories of relative clauses. In the example illustrated above, the noun phrase is introduced by an indefinite article that indicates a generic reference. However, the relative pronoun indicates a well-defined feature. Consequently, the noun phrase assumes a specific reference. For this reason, this type of relative clause is called restrictive relative clause. Moreover, it can be noted that they may also have a null relative pronoun, (represented by the complementizer “that”), as shown by the restrictive relative clause at the beginning of the sentence in (184a). This phenomenon, known as zero complementizer, occurs in English only if such an element is situated in an argument position where it receives its nominative or accusative case, as in (184a), in which it represents the direct object, since the experiencer is always the subject in English. The comparison between the two versions shows that Italian

does not allow the omission of the relative pronoun as shown in (180b). In fact, it must always be expressed (\*L'unica cosa a Harry piaceva del proprio aspetto). The same is valid for the appositive relative clauses (non-restrictive relative clauses):

- (185) a. He was careful to walk a little way apart from the Dursleys, so that Dudley and Piers, who were starting to get bored with the animals by lunch time, wouldn't fall back on their favourite hobby of hitting him. (PhS,24)
- b. Ebbe cura di camminare a una certa distanza dai Dusley in modo che Dudley e Piers, che per l'ora di pranzo avevano già cominciato ad annoiarsi degli animali, non tornassero al loro passatempo preferito di prenderlo a pugni. (PF,30)

From the comparison it can be noted that the relative pronoun (who/che) is present in both versions. As regard the head that precedes it, it consists of two proper nouns (Dudley and Piers), so there is a specific reference. Therefore, the appositive relative clauses, unlike the restrictive ones seen above, only have the function of providing a secondary prediction without modifying the noun phrase reference.

The example illustrated above did not reveal any contrast between the two languages, since both have a relative pronoun. However, English allows the possibility to omit the declarative "that" as shown in the example n.(53a), illustrated in the third chapter:

- (53) a. He promised Harry he would flay him to within an inch of his life when the Masons had left. (ChS,20)
- b. Promise a Harry che quando gli ospiti fossero andati via lo avrebbe scorticato vivo. (CS,21)

As a result, there is a perfect parallelism between declarative and the relative "that", because they can both be omitted in English if they represent the object of the sentence. This suggests that there is a greater freedom in the distribution of



these elements with respect to Italian. This peculiarity is confirmed in another type of relative clause shown below.

### 5.3 Short relative clauses

As previously mentioned, English may allow the possibility to have a relative clause which show a verb expressed by the gerund, as in (186a):

- (186) a. Harry heard her walking towards the kitchen and then the sound of the frying pan being put on the stove. (PhS,19)  
b. Harry sentì i suoi passi avviarsi verso la cucina e poi il rumore della padella che veniva messa sul fornello. (PF,23)

It can also be noted that the relative pronoun and the copula, represented by the auxiliary “be”, are both missing. For this reason, it is called a short relative clause. This particular construction, typical of English, is not allowed in Italian as can be seen from the comparison. In fact, the relative pronoun has to be expressed and the verb cannot be in the gerund form. However there are cases in which even Italian may present a relative clause characterised by a non-finite verb as in (176 b), analysed in the previous chapter. The example in question, taken from the previous chapter contains a present participle with an adjectival function:

- (176) b. C’era una motocicletta volante. (PF, 23)

It may correspond to a finite relative clause (C’era una motocicletta che volava) with a relative pronoun within. Therefore, (176b) can be interpreted as a sort of a short relative clause in which the above element is absent and the verb is non finite.

In the examples analysed so far, the attention has been focused on the use and distribution of the relative pronoun; it may not even be present in English, while Italian requires it. The next paragraph will focus on the uncommon cases where the antecedent, that is the head of the relative clause, may not be expressed.

#### 5.4 Self-antecedent relative clause

The title of the paragraph refers to another type of relative clause, characterized by a null antecedent. In this regard, consider the following examples from Giusti (2003:250):

- (187) a. I spent what he gave me.  
b. Ho speso quanto mi ha dato.

- (188) a. I spent that which he had given me.  
b. Ho speso quello che mi ha dato.

The relative clauses in (188) show both the relative pronoun and the head, which corresponds to the demonstrative (that/quello). This element is absent in (187); in fact the sentences show only the relative pronoun. For this reason, they have been labelled free relative clauses. In this respect, it can also be noted that the relative pronoun which introduces this type of clauses, may also be extended with the suffixe “ever”, as seen in (189a):

- (189) a. Harry, who was feeling distinctly hot in the face said: ”Whatever you’ve heard about my greatness is a load of rubbish”. (ChS,15)  
b. Harry, che si sentiva il viso decisamente in fiamme disse:”Qualsiasi cosa tu abbia sentito dire sulla mia grandezza sono tutte stupidaggini”. (CS,17)

The free relative clause, introduced by a pronoun as the one shown within the quotation in (189a), may appear in the Topic position, to the left of the subject, as shown by the two sentences above, in which the pronoun is found at the beginning of the sentence in both versions.

#### 5.5 Conclusions

The comparative analysis carried out in this chapter showed a rather high amount of subordinate clauses in the English version. This is surprising when one considers that English is based on coordination. Therefore, this statement is not

entirely true, as the results did not show a significant difference between the two languages, because the original version has an almost equal percentage of main clauses and subordinates as does the Italian version. As a result, the analysis of the latter, with particular reference to the relative clauses, has highlighted the contrast between the two languages, as English, unlike Italian, allows for the possibility to have an implicit relative pronoun in the restrictive relative clause, if it represents the direct object of the sentence. This phenomenon is also found in the declarative subordinate clauses. In fact, even in this case the complementizer can be omitted if it represents the direct object, so there is perfect parallelism between the declarative “che” and the relative “che”. As a result, English enjoys a greater freedom in the distribution of these elements in respect to Italian. This is confirmed by another type of relative clause, called short relative clause in which the relative pronoun and the copula may be both absent and the verb is in the gerund. Italian instead does not allow for this particular construction because the presence of the relative pronoun is compulsory and the verb included within the relative must be finite. However, in certain cases, albeit very limited, it is possible to have a short relative clause even in Italian. In fact, the present participle with adjectival function may correspond to a relative clause that has the relative pronoun and a verb in a finite subordinate clause.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

The results of the comparative analysis conducted in this dissertation has shown that English and Italian, although very different from each other, present some unexpected similarities. Firstly, they are both characterized by the same linear order in which the constituents appear in the sentences (S+V+O). In addition, in some particular marked constructions they can allow for the dislocation of an element to the left of the subject, thus both presenting a non-canonical order. However English seems to show a greater rigidity in the word order, since it is not possible to find post-verbal subject pronouns, as in the case of focalisation. This contrast between the two languages has been deeply analysed in the second chapter, where the examples always shown the subject before the verb in English. Italian, meanwhile, has much more freedom in the placement of this element, which may also appear in a post-verbal position if it represents a new information introduced in the discourse. Moreover, the dislocation of this element to the right of the verb is strictly linked to the nature of the latter; in fact unaccusative verbs do not assign accusative case to the direct object, since they are intransitive. Therefore the subject may occupy the post-verbal position, thus becoming a sort of verb phrase internal argument. Consequently the comparison between the two languages seems to confirm the well known postulate according to which English always has a pre-verbal subject. However, the analysis has found some particular constructions where English allows the presence of a post-verbal subject, thus creating a perfect parallelism with Italian. This suggests then, that it is not entirely true that English only allows for the subject to be to the left of the verb.

The same situation came up again in the third chapter, with particular reference to the position of the adjectives. The examples demonstrated that Italian allows both the canonical position, i.e. post-nominal, as well as the pronominal one, with the purpose of describing the quality attributed to the noun, even though in some cases, known as fixed expressions, the dislocation of the adjectives to the right or to the left of the noun is not allowed. As far as English is concerned, adjectives are always found in the same position, before the noun. However, in certain cases, albeit limited, it is possible to find post-nominal adjectives even in the English language. Consequently, also in this case, the comparative analysis has

demonstrated that there may also be exceptions to the rule that provides the exclusive pre-nominal position of the adjectives in English. Therefore, even in this case the postulate mentioned above has proved to be only partly true. The same applies to the structural differences between the two languages analysed in the fifth chapter. The results of the analysis showed that both have almost the same number of main subordinate clauses in the two versions of the novel. Therefore it is not true that English is a hypotactic language based mainly on coordination, while Italian is paratactic, characterized by an increased presence of subordinate clauses. These features, known and commonly accepted were both disproved by the quantitative analysis, and from a comparison of sentences from both versions. In this respect, a compensation between the two languages has been noted, because the Italian version presented a subordinate clause which was absent in the English version, while in the subsequent example occurred the opposite situation. Furthermore, with regard to relative clauses, the comparison between the two languages showed that English may allow for a particular construction named short relative clause, which is not possible to find in Italian, since it is characterized by the absence of the relative pronoun, copula and the verb is expressed by the gerund. Beside this, English showed a greater freedom in the distribution of the relative pronoun, because it can be omitted if it represents the direct object in the relative clause. The same situation occurred in the presence of complement clause; even in this case the complementizer may be missing in English if the clause represents the verb phrase internal argument. This phenomenon, known as zero complementizer is not allowed in Italian, because the afore mentioned element has to be always expressed. Its absence may be allowed in formal style, when a finite complement clause shows a verb expressed by the subjunctive. This contrast between the two languages also occurs in the distribution of the definite articles. In fact, also in this case English allows the possibility not to express them in front of plural nouns with generic reference, abstract nouns and mass nouns, while their presence is required in Italian, except in very limited cases, represented by plural nouns included in a list and predicative expressions, if they show a property of the subject. Therefore it seems to be the latter which presents a more rigid order in regards to distribution and use

of the above mentioned elements, thus the comparative analysis revealed a substantial compensation between the two languages, despite their remarkable difference.

## REFERENCES

- Astrologo, M., 1998, *Harry Potter e la pietra filosofale*, Milano, Salani Editore
- Astrologo, M., 1999, *Harry Potter e la camera dei segreti*, Milano, Salani Editore
- Cardinaletti, A. e Garzone, G., 2005, *L'italiano delle traduzioni*, Milano, FrancoAngeli
- Coopman, P., 1989, *Where Stylistic and Syntactic Processes meet: Locative inversion in English*. In *Language*, Vol.65, No.4, pp: 728-751 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/414932>)
- Garzone, G. e Cardinaletti, A., 2004, *Lingua, mediazione linguistica e interferenza*,
- Giusti, G., 2003, *Strumenti di analisi per la lingua inglese*, Torino, Utet
- Haegeman, L. & Guéron, L. 1999, *English Grammar: A generative perspective*. London: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rowling, J.K., 1998, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone*, London
- Rowling, J.K., 1999, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of the secrets*, London

### Webliography

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morpheme>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raising> (linguistics)