ᛟ᚛Sentence Structure

Key Points

- The dragon language as subject-verb-object sentence structure like English.
- The term *strong* indicates a word can be used as a noun.
- The term *weak* indicates a word cannot be used as a noun.

About Sentence Structure

Sentence structure defines how a language puts words together to make a sentence. Different languages, even constructed ones, have different ways of making sentences. This lesson covers some important terms, such as the parts of speech, which determine how a word can be used.

Parts of Speech

A sentence is made up of many categories of words. The term *parts of speech* refers to these different categories. Below are some of the major parts of speech and examples of them.

Part of Speech	Function	Examples
adjective	describes a noun	*The **red** dragon. A **brave** warrior.*
adverb	describes a verb	*Dragons fly **quickly**. He **valiantly** fought.*
article	gives information about a noun	***The** mountain is **a** tall one. **An** honest man.*
conjunction	joins sentences or phrases	*Nords are strong **and** hardy. This **or** that.*
interjection	standalone expression	***Damn!** The dragon escaped? **Impossible!***
noun	person, place, name, thing, or idea	*This **sword** is sharp. My **name** is Aela.*
preposition	relates other words, usually with direction	*I'm going **into** the cave. Their camp is **on** the river.*
pronoun	stands for a noun	***He** doesn't know **them**.*
verb	action or state	*I **am** here to **slay** dragons.*

Strong & Weak

st English words fit only one part of speech. For example, "speak" can only be used as a verb while "speech" can only be used as a noun. Sometimes, a word can act as multiple parts of speech; "hunt" can be either verb or a noun, and "cold" can be either an adjective or a noun.

Dragon words are highly flexible and may act as multiple parts of speech depending on the context. _Tinvaak_ is both the verb "to speak" and the noun "speech". _Stin_ can be the adjective "free", the verb "to set free", and the noun "freedom".

To describe this phenomonon, we have coined special terms using the words "strong" and "weak". "Strong" indicates a word that can be used as a noun, while "weak" indicates a word that cannot be used as a noun. These terms are grammatical only and do not reflect on the meaning of a word. For example, _sahlo_ "weak" is a strong adjective because it can be used as the noun "weakness," while _suleykaar_ "powerful" is a weak adjective because the word for "power" is _suleyk_.

Below are the special parts of speech and how they can be used in a sentence:

Part of Speech	Usage	Example
strong adjective	**adj.** **adv.** in an adj. manner, being adj. **n.** the state or quality of being adj. **v.** to make or become adj.	**Nahlot** adj. silent adv. silently n. silence v. to silence, make or become silent
weak adjective	**adj.** **adv.** in an adj. manner, being adj. **v.** to make or become adj.	**Kras** adj. sick adv. sickly v. to sicken, make or become sick
strong verb	**v.** **n.** the act of v. **adj.** past or present participle of v. **adv.** having been v.; doing v.	**Ahraan** v. to wound n. wound adj. wounded; wounding adv. woundedly
weak verb	**v.** **n.** the act of v. **adj.** past or present participle of v. **adv.** having been v.; doing v.	**Kron** v. to conquer, win adj. conquered; conquering adv. having been conquered; conquering

When a word is weak, there is typically an explicit noun. For example, _kras_ "sick" is weak given _krasaar_ "sickness", and _kron_ "to conquer" is weak given _krongrah_ "victory/conquest".

Subjects, Verbs, and Objects

st sentences contain three main components: a *subject*, an *object*, and a *verb*. The *subject* is the noun that the sentence is about, and is performing the action. The *object* is the noun that the subject is performing the action on. The *verb* is the action itself.

In the sentence "The Dragonborn slays dragons", the subject is "The Dragonborn", the object is "dragons", and the verb is "slays".

Sentence structure is how these parts are ordered. In English, sentences are structured *subject-verb-object*. The dragon language is structured the same way, with some exceptions which we'll get to below.

Some languages are referred to as *synthetic languages*, where most of the grammatical information in a sentence is carried by changing the form of a verb ("conjugation") or a noun or adjective ("declension"). German and Russian are examples of synthetic languages. These languages have flexible sentence structure because changing word order doesn't change the meaning of a sentence. In contrast, *analytic languages* such as English use other means to carry the same information. This makes sentence structure important to follow. "The cat ate the cake" has a very different meaning from "the cake ate the cat". The dragon language, like English, is highly analytic, and relies on sentence structure to indicate the subject, verb, and object of a sentence.

> *"We started off making specific rules for the way words would work together ... And then we realized that it had started to collapse under its own weight. The more rules we wanted to keep track of, and the more complex it became, we knew the more complicated it would be for the designers to use, and the more mistakes we would make. So we really tried to keep it much more simple." - Senior Designer Emil Pagliarulo*

Phrasing Questions

In English, questions are formed with the help of extra verbs such as "do" or "have". In the dragon language, questions are formed by flipping the subject and the verb. *Hi koraav dovah* "You see the dragon" simply becomes *Koraav hi dovah?* "Do you see the dragon?".

This can also extend to more complex examples, such as past participles. *Tiid boaan vokriiha suleyksejun kruziik* "The time has come to restore the ancient dominion" can become the question *Boaan tiid vokriiha suleyksejun kruziik* "Has the time come to restore the ancient dominion?"

Exercises

1. What are the nouns in the sentence, "Belethor sold the shield to Lydia"?

See answer

2. What are the verbs in the sentence, "Do you know where I can find the Jarl?"

answer

3. What are the subject, object, and verb in the sentence, "Miraak betrayed the dragons"?

See answer

4. What is the difference between a strong verb and a weak verb?

See answer

5. Rephrase the question, "When did you become king?", as it might appear in the dragon language.

See answer

NEXT LESSON: Pronouns >>