ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
ENGLISH

DICTIONARIES OF:

GRAMMAR • USAGE

SPELLING • PUNCTUATION

PRONUNCIATION

ROOTS • PREFIXES & SUFFIXES

RHETORIC • RIMES

WORLD LITERATURE

ARTHUR ZEIGER

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
ENGLISH

DICTIONARIES OF:

GRAMMAR • USAGE

SPELLING • PUNCTUATION

PRONUNCIATION

ROOTS • PREFIXES & SUFFIXES

RHETORIC • RIMES

WORLD LITERATURE

EDITED BY **ARTHUR ZEIGER**

Preface

To SERVE BOTH as a manual of instruction and as a work of reference—such is the two-fold purpose of this Encyclopedia. The plan subserves the purpose. Wherever feasible, two books have been devoted to a subject: the first systematically presenting fundamentals, the other exploring ramifications. Thus, the needs of the beginning and the advanced reader are fairly met. The content and intent of the individual books are outlined below:

I and II: "Grammar for Use" describes the "persistent pattern of related words," and its aim is to be illuminating rather than exhaustive on such various matters as case, inflection, and concord. The "Dictionary of Grammar" is comprehensive and complex, and ought to be studied intensively only by those estimable people who peruse dictionaries with enjoyment.

III and IV: The first of the two books on English spelling is a guide through its mazes, setting forth the few rules and the many exceptions. The second book is a dictionary listing the mavericks of the spelling range, with suggestions for their corralling.

V and VI: The book on "Punctuation" answers such questions as: Why punctuate? What is essential punctuation? How does "open punctuation" differ from "close punctuation"? The "Dictionary of Punctuation" is concerned with practice rather than principles. It is based on the Government Printing Office *Style Manual*, a work chosen because its source makes it authoritative; because it is relatively complete; and because it embodies a logical and practicable code.

VII and VIII: The book on "Pronunciation" recognizes the "sanctions of section," but specifies and analyzes those elements of pronunciation that are the same for North, South, East and West. The "Dictionary" indicates as simply and accurately as may be the correct pronunciations of a large number of words often mispronounced.

IX and X: Both of the books on usage are decidedly *unpuristic*. However, though emphatically liberal, each declares for certain values and recognizes certain standards. The first of the two books dealing with usage considers the constructions most frequently abused; examines reference, agreement, idiom; and tries to suggest reasonable norms for writing and for speaking. The "Dictionary" supplies a selec-

v

tive list of words and expressions often misused, emphasizing the different franchises granted by usage to oral and to written language.

XI, XII, XIII: The three books on vocabulary have a single objective: to show the reader how he can improve his active vocabulary. The techniques are amply described in the first of the three books. Perhaps, though, it would be well to emphasize that the "Dictionary of Affixes" and the "Dictionary of Roots and Stems" are specialized dictionaries. Consequently, in the columns headed *Examples,* definitions are distorted—twisted so that the meaning and function of the prefix, suffix, or root becomes clear. The dictionaries are stringently edited versions of James Stormonth's and John Kennedy's excellent compilations.

XIV and XV: The book entitled "Rhetoric and Composition" is a synthesis of observations on the writer's craft—usually the observations of expert writers—that have proved helpful to beginning writers. The "Dictionary of Rhetoric" records the figures of speech. These traditional "embellishing" devices vary in modern esteem from desirable to reprehensible, and the "Dictionary" is a brief anthology of good and of horrible examples.

XVI and XVII: The book on "Prosody" discusses both the traditional techniques, forms, and types of verse and the recent departures from tradition. The "Dictionary of Rimes" is a modified and modernized version of Thomas Hood's famous compendium.

XVIII: The "History of the English Language" records the successive changes in grammar and vocabulary from Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-American. Representative word-lists—culled, for most part, from Skeat, Nesfield, and Earle—point up the foreign debt of English.

XIX: The forms and types of world literature are briefly analyzed in "The Dictionary of World Literature" and the chief names connected with them are cited. The entries are especially relevant to the "History of English and American Literature."

XX: Any short survey of twelve centuries of English and four of American prose and poetry must obviously adopt a highly selective approach. The "History of English and American Literature—from Beowulf to Thomas Wolfe" stresses those writings which are part of our living literature, scanting those which are important mainly from a historical viewpoint. Consequently this book is as much a recommended-reading list as it is a history.

Abbreviations in this volume for which reference is at all necessary will be found on pages 158 to 161 and on page 180.

Some acknowledgment of sources is made in the bibliography and in the body of the text itself. The number of authorities consulted, however, makes it practicable to issue only a general "Thanks!"

ARTHUR ZEIGER

Contents

viii   C O N T E N T S

Grammar for Use

Usage

Grammar comes not from the gods but from grammarians. Man communicates his thoughts, feelings, desires by means of words. Grammarians note that many of these words are concerned with naming, and these they term *nouns*. Similarly, chemists note that many compounds have certain characteristics in common and call them *acids*. Both *words* and *acids*, the things-in-themselves, may have been created by whatever gods may be; but the peculiar systems of classification are undeniably man-made.

From Formalism to Functionalism

We emphasize the human as against the divine origin of grammar because not until grammarians learned that basic fact of language-life did they discard a false and dead formalism. Supposing that grammar was inherent in a language, not a series of generalized statements *about* a language, grammarians supposed that they could discover the norm by logic, and so authoritatively correct errant constructions. Consequently they combated attempts to establish usage as the touchstone of acceptable speech.

Further, since most of them had much Latin but little or no German, they discovered parallels between English and

Latin where none in fact existed—and disregarded the plentiful Germanic parallels.[1] Thus, though English nouns have only two case forms,[2] the false analogy with the Latin that the early grammarians forced has brought into English such essentially foreign case terms as *Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Vocative,* and *Locative.*

The chief functions of the grammarians who in the eighteenth century (the period of greatest grammatical activity) attempted to "ascertain our language," were, they conceived, prescription and proscription—telling what was and what was not "correct" speech. They assumed the role of the lawgiver, rejected that of the reporter. They succeeded in establishing as "incorrect" such native English locutions as the double negative, the split infinitive, *this here* and *that there;* and as "correct," *different from* instead of *different than* or *to, I would rather* instead of *I had rather, you were* instead of *you was.*

There were, however, a few anticipations of the modern concept of the primacy of usage in determining grammar. Joseph Priestly, the most clear-headed of the eighteenth-century grammarians, declared that "the custom of speaking is the original and only just standard of any language." Grammar could not be established, he held, by "the arbitrary rules of any man, or body of men whatever." George Campbell set up a triple criterion for usage (which, he affirmed, was the ultimate authority and which it was the grammarians' business to note, collect, and methodize): usage to be authoritative must be *present, national,* and *reputable.* There is no better modern statement of the functional attitude toward grammar.

Usage—Theory and Practice

Grammar is based on function or usage. But there are levels of usage. What would be a right and fitting expression

---

[1] In early English usage, *grammar* meant only Latin grammar. Not until the seventeenth century was the word used generically, so that there was no need to refer explicitly to English grammar.

[2] The common form, which does not vary whether it is used as subject or object, and the possessive form.

in an army barracks might not be acceptable at a meeting of the Modern Language Association. The soberest functionalist would (in practice) rather split a quart than an infinitive—though he would (in theory) enthusiastically agree that there was nothing wrong in splitting an infinitive. For example, Philip Krapp, a complete modern in his attitude toward grammar, regards the old rule, to the effect that *one* must always be referred to by itself or a form of itself, as making for an unnecessary awkwardness. (A possible sentence—grammatically immaculate—might read: "One thinks oneself one of a select group if one invariably minds one's ones.") Yet Professor Krapp consistently practices the rule he does not preach.

Levels of Usage

The levels of usage—vulgar, colloquial, formal—establish separate forms. *It's me* is unexceptionable, normally; and *it is I,* normally, is affected. St. Peter standing at the Pearly Gates is alleged to have asked an applicant for entrance, "Who's there?" and to have been answered, "It is I." The Saint is supposed to have groaned and said, "Damn! Another English teacher!" Nevertheless, if you *are* an English teacher (or if you are making a formal presentation) it would be advisable to say, "It is I." Communication is the *"without-which-nothing"* of grammar; but communication appropriate to the time, the place, and the group is the *all* of grammar.

Rules and Usage

There is only one "law" of grammar: if any construction is used often enough and widely enough, it is right and proper. There are no invariable "rules of grammar." However, there are descriptive generalizations concerning grammar. They are valuable, when they conform to reality, in the same way that a periodic chart of chemical elements is valuable: both abridge the total learning process. But remember: if a generalization and a usage do not agree, the generalization is not necessarily wrong, and the usage cer-

tainly is not. It is merely that the generalization is not comprehensive enough to cover the usage.

The Vocabulary of Grammar

Grammatical terms and their definitions are a short-cut to the learning of usage. They are imperfect, but they will do. Why compound confusion by creating a new set of terms and a new set of definitions? Let us anticipate for the sake of illustration. A sentence has long been defined as a complete communication, containing both subject and verb. So be it. But it is pointed out that a number of complete communications have neither subject nor verb. "Huh?" for example, though less elegant, may be as complete a communication, as, "I am amazed!" Let us, then, call communications which present a complete (or relatively complete) communication by some other term, one which indicates how it is like and how unlike the sentence. Two such terms have been suggested: *presentative sentence* and *nonsentence.* Either will do, but the former is becoming the standard term. If we redefine *sentence* itself to include the variation which does not include the verb-subject combination, we shall have to redefine clause, phrase, and an indeterminate number of other fairly standard terms. The paraphernalia of grammar is already too cumbersome to weight it with alternative terms and definitions. A common-sense approach will solve many of the so-called perennial problems of grammar.

What Is Grammar?

Grammar was once a synonym for learning in general.[1] Its scope has narrowed a good deal. Today grammar signifies: "That department of the study of a language which deals with its inflectional forms or other means of indicating the relations of words in the sentence, and with the rules for employing them in accordance with established usage."[2]

[1] The *NED* says, "As this was popularly supposed to include magic and astrology, the Old French *gramaire* was sometimes used as a name for these occult sciences. In these applications it still survives in certain corrupt forms, French *grimoire*, English *glamour, gramary.*"

[2] The *NED* criticizes the definitions of such formal grammarians as Lindley Murray ("English grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English

Psychology of Grammar

Grammar has logic, a definite form and structure. There is, though, a psychology and a sociology of grammar too, and these have been habitually neglected. Grammar is the product of the social group and of the individuals who comprise it. Even the simplest example of communication, Pillsbury has remarked, "such as 'Please pass the butter!' . . . or even the single word 'Butter!' are life processes, intelligible only as part and parcel of the particular situation within which they came into being and of which they are an essential and formative factor, both determined by the situation and, in turn, affecting it, growing out of the needs of the individual in his surroundings, employing those surroundings for his self-realization, and, in turn modifying those surroundings by his action." Unless we remember the psychological base of English, we shall be at a loss to analyze a tremendous number of locutions. Examine this sentence: *Conn was given a stiff right uppercut.* The construction is a familiar one, and it is apparent that not *Conn* but the *uppercut* was given. Yet the logic of English word order is violated. To derive the intended meaning it is necessary to bridge a psychological gap. Frequently in the sections which follow we shall have to appeal from the logic to the psychology of English grammar.

Words: The Parts of Speech

Words have certain functions in communicating thought, and grammarians have classified words, according to function, into eight groups—the "parts of speech." They are: *nouns* and *pronouns,* together often termed *substantives,* words which name; *verbs,* which assert; *adjectives* and *adverbs,* which modify; *prepositions* and *conjunctions,* which connect; and *interjections,* which exclaim. The functions are not exclusive one of the other. Frequently a noun—or any other part of speech—may assert. Compare *The rains came*

language with propriety") as being at once too narrow and too wide; too narrow because "it applies only to a portion of this branch of study"; and too wide because "many questions of 'correctness' in language are outside its province" —*e.g.,* spelling and pronunciation.

with *It rains*. The word *rains* asserts in both communications, but the *action of raining* is subordinated in the first and central in the second. Hence, in the second, *rains* is said to be a *verb*.

Again, there is nothing necessary and eternal in this eight-fold division of words. Aristotle counted only four: the substantive, the adjective, the verb, and the particle.[1] And if you choose, you can say that there are two—or four —or six dozen parts of speech and defend your stand. Adjectives, for example, are sometimes subdivided into the qualitative, the descriptive, the numbering, and the demonstrative. You can give each of these a separate name and declare each a separate part of speech. The functions differ somewhat, and you could justify your procedure on the basis of function. We hope you will not embark on the procedure though, because the eight parts of speech are a fair working compromise. They are general enough to summarize the totality of English words and specific enough to distinguish, roughly, any one function from any other.

One other thing to remember about the parts of speech: *once an adjective,* it does *not* follow, *always an adjective.* The parts are not given for all time; if a word functions differently in different sentences—plays a different "part"— it will be called something else. Look at the sentences quoted a little while ago: *The rains came* and *It rains.* The same word is used in both sentences; yet *rains* has a noun, or naming, function in the first and a verb, or asserting, function in the second. Remember this very important principle of grammar, and you will find the going relatively easy on the succeeding pages: The *function of* a word *determines its classification;* or, differently put, *how it is used determines what it is called.* Not even such an eminently assertive word as *run* can be called a verb out of context. A young lady's stocking may *run* (verb), or she may have a *run* (noun) in her stocking. The same consideration of context applies to the other parts of speech.

[1]The particle is defined as "a minor part of speech, especially a short, indeclinable one." The "minor" is debatable. Adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, numerals, and some pronouns are considered particles.

Words in Meaningful Combination: The Sentence

Any combination of words in which something meaningful is said about something or someone else is called a **sentence.** (Latin *sententia,* a judgment, opinion.) It may consist of two words,[1] *Jesus wept* (the shortest verse in the *Bible*), or of a thousand (the longest recorded English sentence, in Edward Phillips's "Preface" to *Theatrum Poetarum,* consists of 1012 words).

Sentences may be **declarative, interrogative, imperative,** or **exclamatory,** depending on the kind of communication made. Thus, any sentence which makes an affirmation (or denial) is classified as declarative: *Men must die.* Any sentence which asks a question is classified as interrogative: *Must men die?* Any sentence which expresses a command (or demand, desire, entreaty, or wish) is classified as imperative: *Let the men die.* Any sentence which declares, asks, or commands in an energetic enough manner is classified as exclamatory: *The men must die!*

Note that these are not logic-tight categories. Conversion is largely a matter of substituting one of the end-stops (period, question mark, or exclamation point) for another. The intent and the emotional charge establish the category. Again, the combination of kinds of sentences is frequent: *The men asked, "Must we die?" He ordered, "The men must die!"* Both of these sentences are usually considered declarative, because they are essentially statements. Yet there is room for argument, if you have a taste for grammar-mongering. However, only where doubt concerning the proper mark of punctuation to employ is involved does the argument become at all important; and that doubt can be resolved by considering the intention of the sentence.

The **nonsentence** or the **presentative sentence** expresses a complete thought, but without one of the necessary sentence elements, subject and verb. This is not to be confused with the omission of the subject in imperative sentences. When the gun commander of a battery issues the order to "Fire!"

[1] Certain types of sentences may consist of only one word, usually with subject understood, as, [You] Go!

the subject *you* is understood by his men. (*You* [understood] is said to be the subject of the sentence.)

We have been employing the terms **subject** and **predicate** throughout as if they, too, were understood. The subject (Latin *subjectus*, placed under) was supposed to be under the domination of the predicate (Latin *predicatus*, proclaim). In a sense it is, no doubt, since it is the person or thing spoken about, and the predicate is what is said. In the following sentences the subject is underlined once, and the predicate twice:

Man proposes.

The best-laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley.

The winds of heaven mix for ever with a sweet emotion.

To determine which is subject and which predicate, simply remember their meanings: *what is spoken of,* and *what is said.*[1]

One other sentence element should receive brief attention here. The **object** (Latin *objectus*, placed against) receives whatever action the verb generates. To determine whether a verb has an object, ask *Who?* or *What?* after it. Thus, in *The mountains kiss high heaven,* heaven is the answer to *What?*—it receives the kiss which the mountains bestow. Often no answer to *Who?* or *What?* will be forthcoming: there will, then, be no object.

Inflection: The Change in Form

Inflection (Latin *inflexis,* bending[2]) describes the variation in a word to express some variation in function or meaning—a variation, though, which is not so basic as to create a new word. *Men* is an inflection of *man* and signifies "more than one man." *Him* is the inflection of *he* which indicates the objective case. *Was* is an inflection of *am,* the one being a form of the past tense, the other of the present.

[1] Thus, even where their normal positions are inverted (as *Gone are they*), by keeping their meanings in mind, no difficulty in determining subject and predicate should be encountered.

[2] An inflection may be considered "a bending away from the ordinary form of a word."

The dictionary defines inflection as "The change of form which words undergo to mark distinctions of case, gender, number, tense, person, mood, voice, etc." Noun and pronoun inflection is termed **declension,** and refers to changes in the forms of the substantives to indicate gender, number, and case. Verb inflection, or **conjugation,** denotes the changes in the form of the verb to indicate voice, mood, tense, number, and person. Actually, in English, there are only two "major or live" inflections—number and tense. The other inflections are dead or dying. The employment of particles and of a logical word order rather than of inflections characterize modern English.[1]
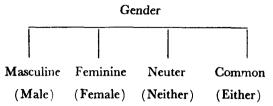
Declension: Gender of Nouns

Gender (Latin *genus,* a kind or sort) is that modification of a word by means of which objects are distinguished in regard to sex. In English, grammatical gender is almost completely logical. *Husband* and *wife, boy* and *girl, hart* and *roe, wizard* and *witch, monk* and *nun* are pairs,[2] but they have different referents. The difference between any pair is organic, not inflectional. Perhaps pairs like *actor* and *actress, count* and *countess, hero* and *heroine, sultan* and *sultana* may be legitimately regarded as embodying inflectional changes, particularly when their histories are taken into account. However, it is better and simpler to say only that male names (*boy, hart, actor, hero, sultan*) are of **masculine gender;** that female names (*girl, roe, actress, heroine, sultana*) are of **feminine gender;** and that the names of objects (*thing, hand, book*) are of **neuter gender.** If the sex is indeterminate (*sheep, bird, parent, writer, servant*), the animals or persons are said to be of **common gender.** The whole subject of noun gender may be dismissed with three words: *gender follows sex.*[3]

[1]Consequently modern English is referred to as an analytic language, whereas Latin and Old English are termed synthetic languages.

[2]See "Dictionary of Grammar" for a complete listing.

[3]Natural gender does not prevail in most European languages, nor did it in Old English. In Old English nouns ending in *dom* (as *freedom*) were masculine; nouns ending in *ness* (*goodness*), feminine; and nouns ending in *en* (*maiden*), neuter.

Gender

```
         ┌──────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
         │          │          │          │
     Masculine   Feminine   Neuter    Common
      (Male)     (Female)  (Neither)  (Either)
```

Personifications—that is, things or abstractions factitiously endowed with personality—may be either masculine or feminine. The *Sun, Time, Ocean, Anger, War* are generally made masculine when personified; *Moon,* a *ship, Earth, Virtue, Religion, Pity, Peace, Philosophy, Charity* are generally made feminine. The explanation for these assigned genders is partly psychological, partly mythological, partly etymological.

The psychological phase of the explanation is explored by Cobbett in his remarks concerning the reasons for saying *she* when speaking of a ship: "The mower calls his scythe a *she;* the plowman calls his plow a *she,* but a prong, or a shovel, or a harrow, which passes promiscuously from hand to hand, and which is appropriated to no particular laborer, is called a *he*. It was, doubtless, from this sort of habitual attachment that our famous maritime solecism arose."

The mythological phase of personification is illuminated by considering *the Sun*. The Germans still say "the sun in her glory, the moon in his wane."[1] We have reversed the gender because of the pervasive influence of classical mythology, in which Phoebus is the sun-god and Diana the moon-goddess.

The classical (etymological) influence also operates on such abstractions as *philosophy, charity, liberty*. They are personified as feminine because they were of feminine gender in Latin, and our poets learned their rhetoric from Latin literature.

Noun Declension: Case

By the **case** of a noun grammarians mean "the changes of form it undergoes to show its relationship to another

[1]Compare this extract from an Icelandic Edda: "Mundifori had two children, a son, Mani (Moon), and a daughter, Sol (Sun)."