

THE STRUCTURE OF COMPLEMENTATION

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A structure of complementation consists of two immediate constituents:

a verbal element (VB) and a complement (C).

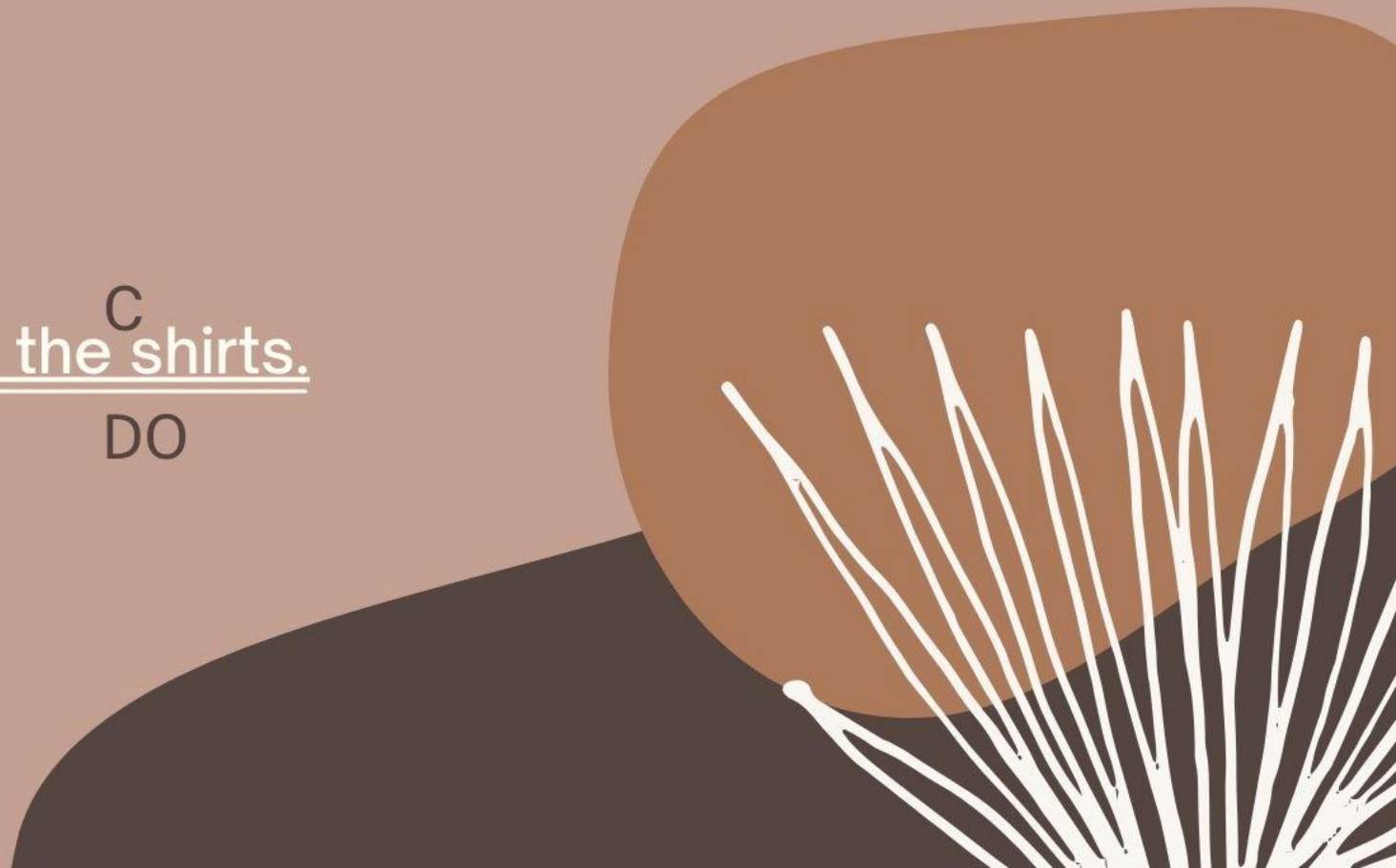
- The verbal element can be a simple verb or a syntactic structure in which the verb must be the core.
- Therefore, a verbal element may be an infinitive, a verb or a verb phrase, or a structure of coordination.

3. Verb phrase

Martha ^{VB} is buying / *her sister* ^C a beautiful doll.
IO DO

4. Structure of coordination

The maid ^{VB} washed and dried / ^C the shirts.
DO



The complements which appear in structures of complementation may be divided into four types:

I. Subjective Complement

- A subjective complement occurs with a linking verb which is followed by information that describes the subject.
- Therefore, a subjective complement always refers to the subject of the sentence.

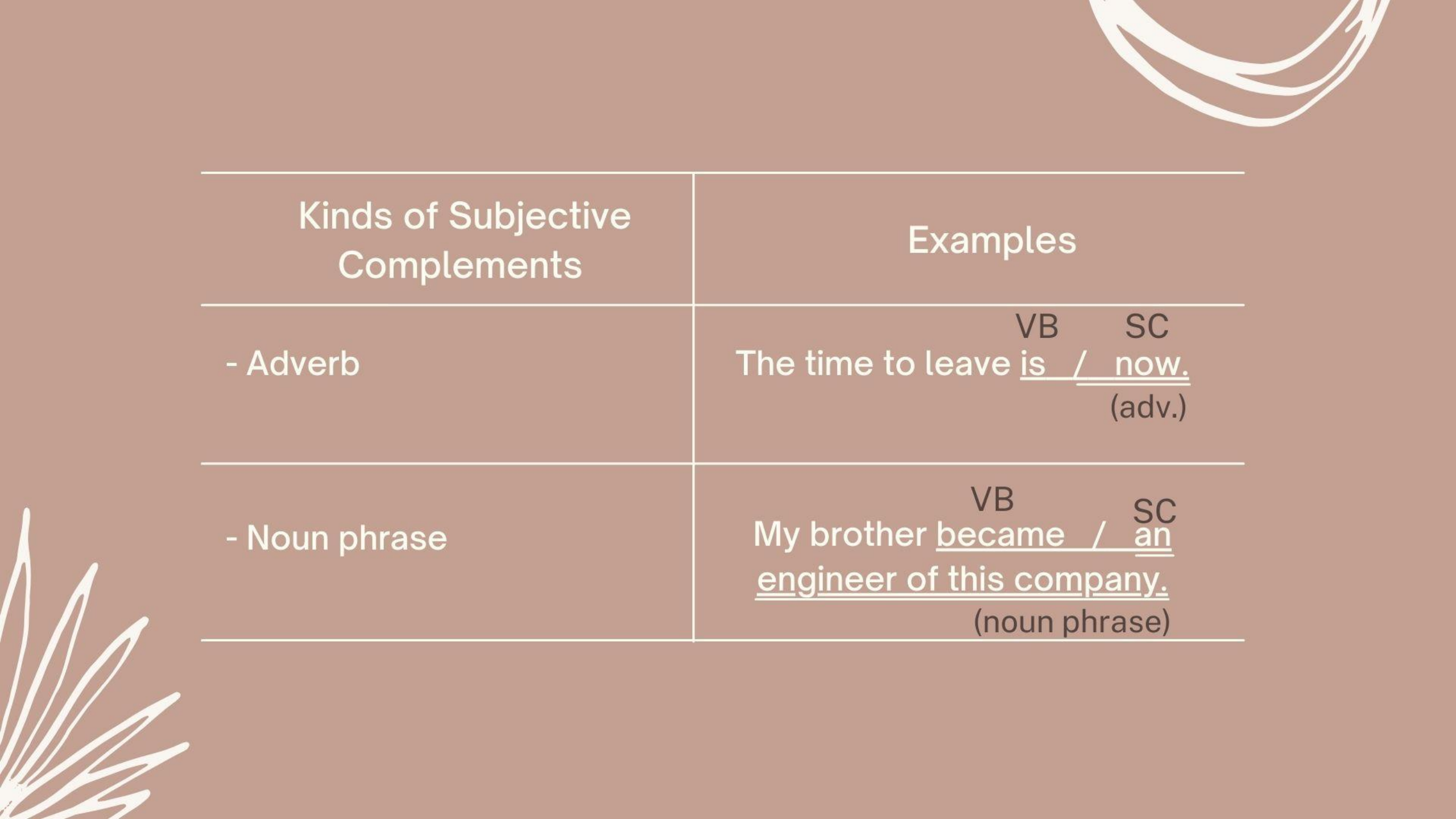


I. Subjective Complement (cont.)

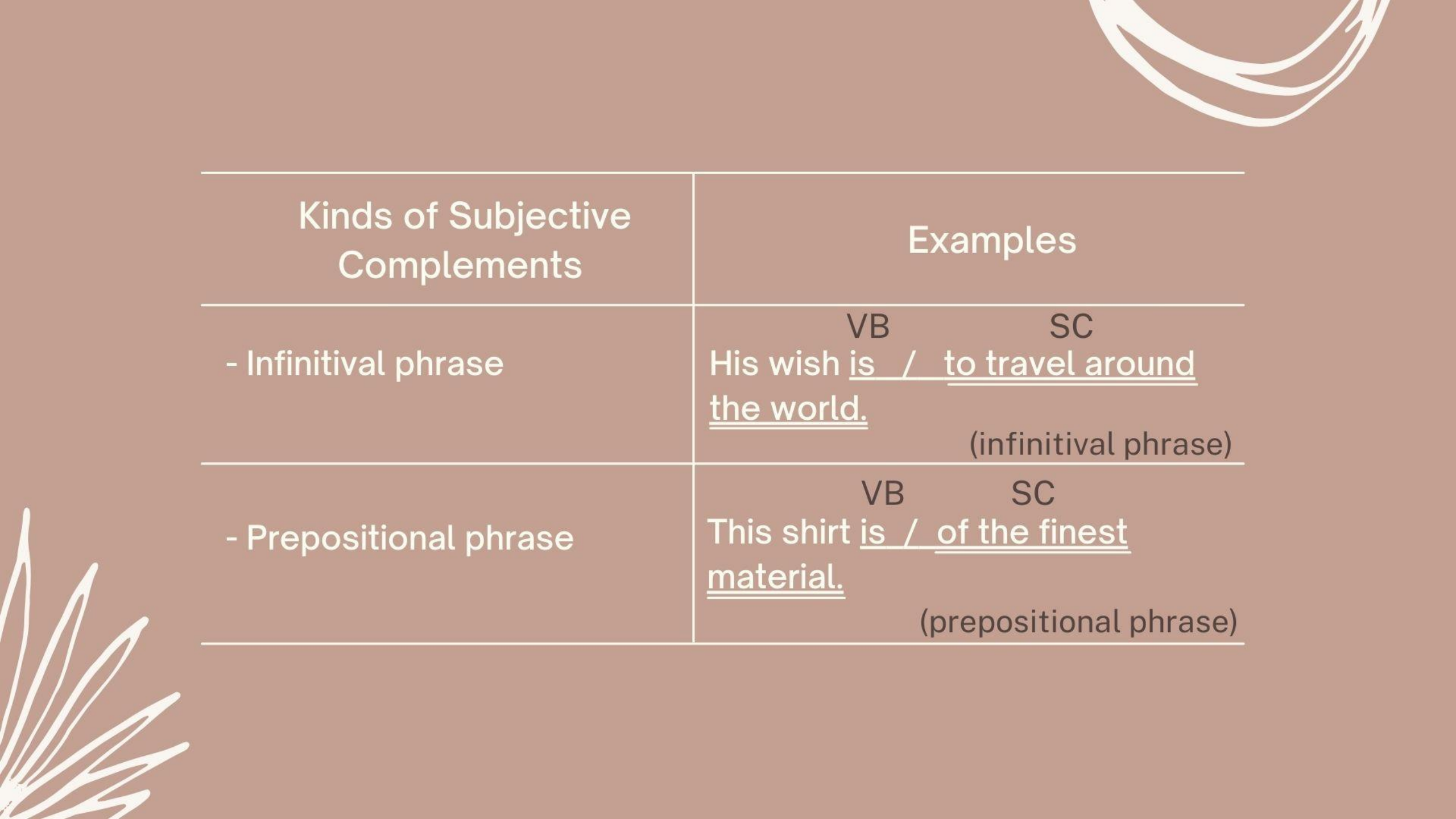
- The most common linking verb is the verb to be. Others are sense verbs like *look*, *taste*, *smell*, *feel*, and *sound*.
- In addition, *become*, *seem*, *appear*, *grow*, *get*, *go*, *stay*, and *turn* can also be linking verbs.
- A subjective complement may be a single word or a phrase.
- It may be a structure of modification, a structure of coordination, or a structure of complementation itself.

The following examples show different kinds of subjective complements:

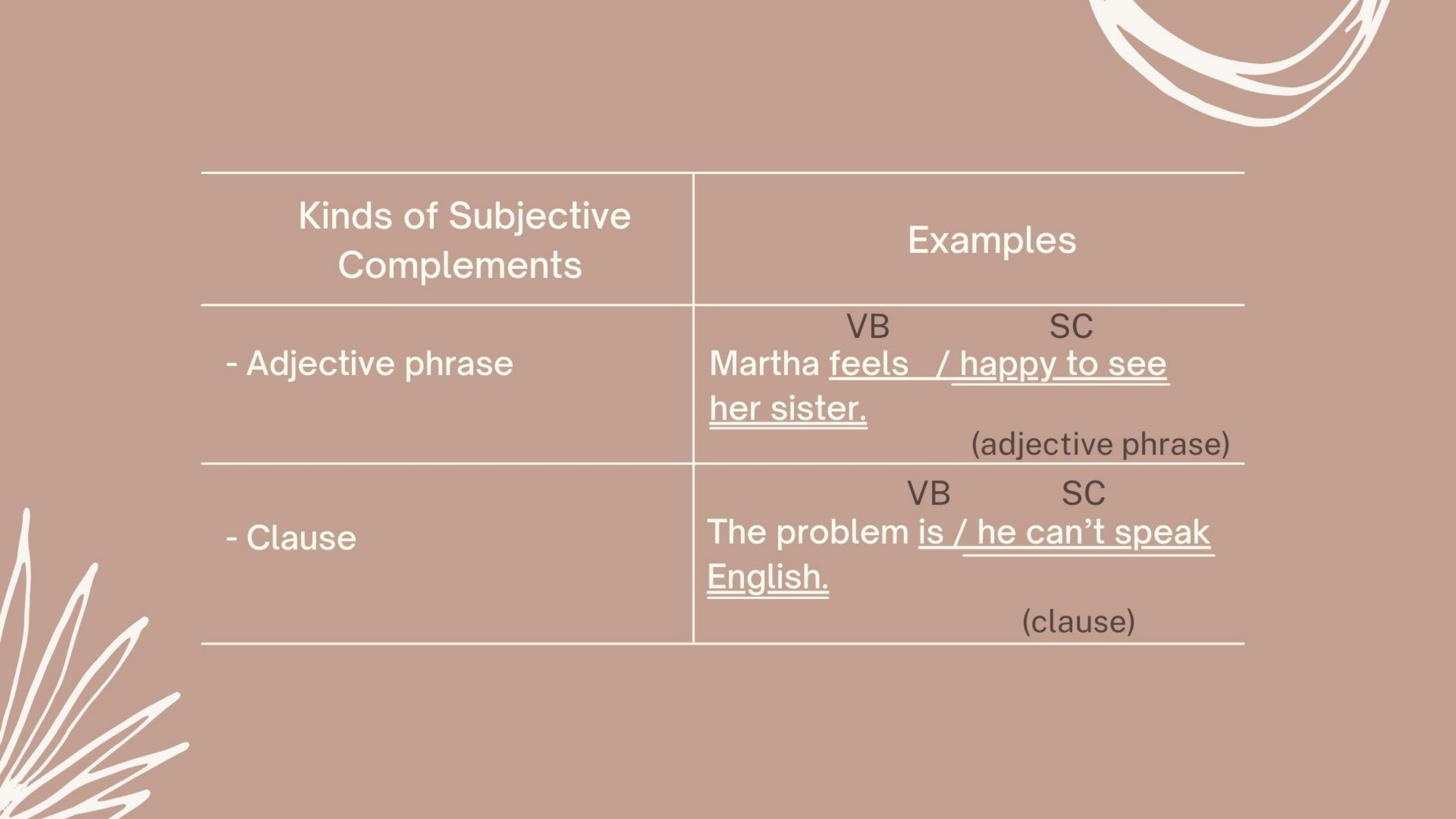
Kinds of Subjective Complements	Examples
- Verb in present participle	VB SC Helen's trade <u>is</u> / <u>writing</u> . (present participle)
- Adjective	VB SC Those trainees <u>seem</u> / <u>nervous</u> . (adj.)



Kinds of Subjective Complements	Examples
- Adverb	The time to leave ^{VB} <u>is</u> / ^{SC} <u>now</u> . (adv.)
- Noun phrase	My brother ^{VB} <u>became</u> / ^{SC} <u>an engineer of this company</u> . (noun phrase)



Kinds of Subjective Complements	Examples
- Infinitival phrase	<p style="text-align: center;">VB SC</p> <p>His wish <u>is</u> / <u>to travel around the world.</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(infinitival phrase)</p>
- Prepositional phrase	<p style="text-align: center;">VB SC</p> <p>This shirt <u>is</u> / <u>of the finest material.</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(prepositional phrase)</p>



Kinds of Subjective Complements	Examples
- Adjective phrase	<p style="text-align: center;">VB SC</p> <p>Martha <u>feels</u> / <u>happy to see</u> <u>her sister.</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(adjective phrase)</p>
- Clause	<p style="text-align: center;">VB SC</p> <p>The problem <u>is</u> / <u>he can't speak</u> <u>English.</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(clause)</p>

Some linking verbs have homonyms which are either transitive or intransitive verbs. They are *turn*, *blow*, *sound*, and *grow*.

The following examples illustrate that these verbs can belong to all three types: **linking verbs**, **transitive verbs**, and **intransitive verb**.



Linking verbs	Transitive verbs	Intransitive verbs
His face ^{VB} <u>turns</u> / ^{SC} <u>red.</u>	He is ^{VB} <u>turning</u> / ^{DO} <u>that</u> <u>top.</u>	The earth <u>turns.</u>

II. Direct Object

- A direct object occurs with a monotransitive verb.
- A direct object can be a single word or one of four syntactic structures: a structure of modification, a structure of predication, a structure of complementation, or a structure of coordination as in the following examples:



III. Indirect Object

- An indirect object occurs before a direct object and after a ditransitive verb.
- Unlike direct objects which may be various parts of speech or more complex structures, indirect objects are always nouns, noun-headed structures of modification, or structure of coordination with noun constituents. (Francis 1958: 351-352)

Kinds of Indirect Objects	Examples
- Noun or pronoun	<p style="text-align: center;"> VB IO DO Mary <u>told</u> / <u>John</u> <u>her telephone</u> <u>number.</u> (noun) </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> VB IO DO Jim <u>gave</u> / <u>her</u> <u>a get-well card.</u> (pronoun) </p>

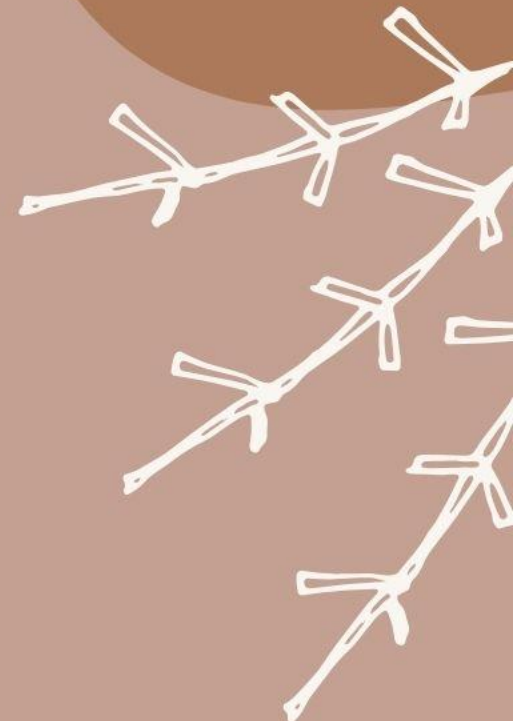
Kinds of Indirect Objects	Examples
- Noun phrase	VB IO Grandmother <u>paid</u> / <u>the driver of</u> <u>the cab a dollar.</u> DO (noun phrase)



Note that an indirect object **may be changed** to a corresponding prepositional phrase without any change in meaning, but its position must be after the direct object:

• The tenant ^{VB} paid / ^{IO} the plumber ^{DO} 40 dollars.

• The tenant ^{VB} paid ^{DO} 40 dollars to the plumber.
(prepositional phrase)



The verbal element may also be changed into **passive construction**:

VB

IO

DO

- Nancy handed / *Uncle Joe* the evening paper.
- Uncle Joe was handed the evening paper (by Nancy).
- The evening paper was handed Uncle Joe (by Nancy).



IV. Objective Complement



- An objective complement refers to the direct object of the sentence. It occurs after a complextransitive verb and direct object respectively.
- Objective complements, which are sometimes called predicate objectives, may be nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs (in both present participle and past participle form), prepositional phrases, structure of modification, or structure of coordination.
- The complextransitive verbs, which are followed by a direct object and an indirect object complement, usually have the meaning of **designate** and **cause to be**. (Crowell, Jr. 1987: 243)

appoint

call

choose

consider

declare

dye

elect

find

have

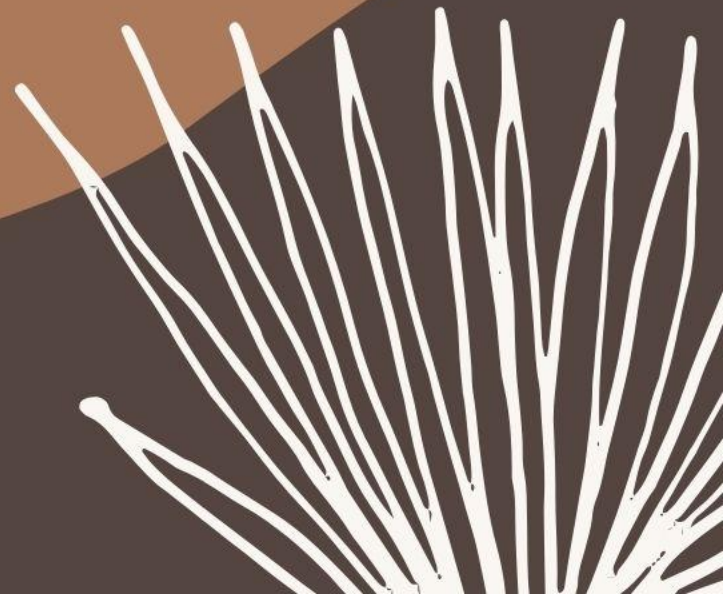
keep

leave

name

pronounce

Complextransitive verbs

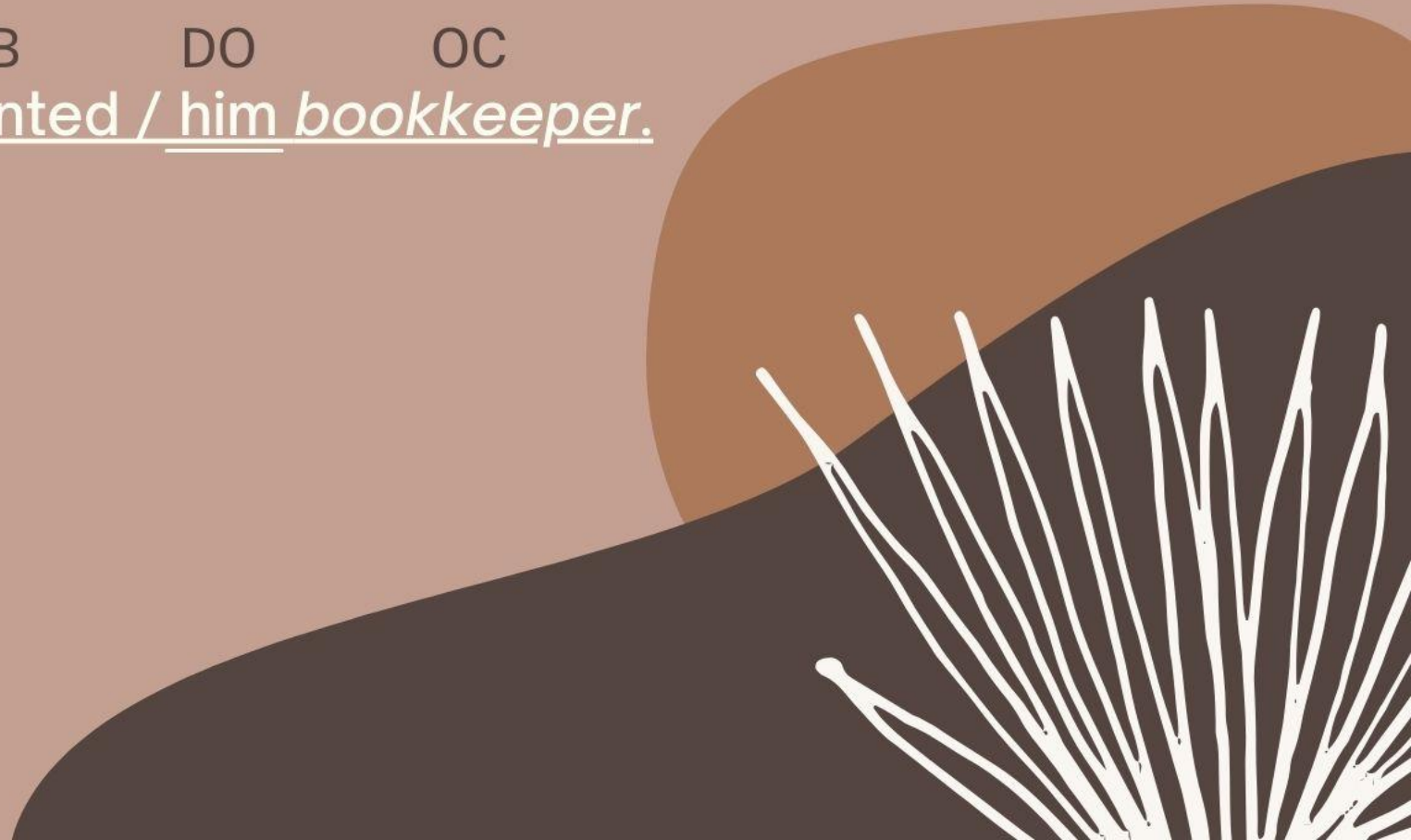


Complextransitive verbs

An example: 'appoint'

VB DO OC

The committee appointed / him bookkeeper.



These complextransitive verbs can be changed into **passive construction**.

Only the direct object becomes the subject. The original subject of the active construction is often but not always converted into a prepositional phrase beginning with **by** (Crowell, Jr. 1987: 279):

- They pronounced that soldier a traitor and a liar.
- That soldier was pronounced a traitor and a liar (by them).

However, a prepositional phrase cannot be substituted for the direct object; that is, it's wrong to say *They pronounced to that soldier a traitor and a liar*.



REFERENCE

Jotikasthira, P. (2014). Introduction to the English Language : System and Structure. Bangkok: Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.

