

# COURSE TITLE: SYNTAX

WEEK 4: ENGLISH CLAUSES

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# LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- i. Explain the meaning of clauses
- ii. Describe types of clauses/sentences
- iii. Use clauses for various functions
- iv. Join clauses correctly.

# Introduction

- ▶ Last week, we talked about phrases.
- ▶ In the syntactic hierarchy, phrases are below clauses,
- ▶ Clauses are below sentences; however, there are clauses that are also sentences.
- ▶ These are the ones that make complete meaning.
- ▶ Clauses are joined to each other by means of coordination or subordination.
- ▶ For purposes of our study, we are going to talk about two types of clauses:
- ▶ Independent/ main clauses= sentences
- ▶ Dependent/ subordinates clauses=

# DEFINITION OF SENTENCES

- ▶ Note: You may find some grammar books referring to clauses as sentences; main clauses.
- ▶ A SENTENCE is the largest unit in grammar.
- ▶ Notional definition- a sentence expresses complete thought (Nelson & Greenbaum (2016)).
- ▶ The problem with this view is what ‘complete thought’ means.
- ▶ ‘Notices such as: ‘ entry, men/women at work, danger’ are not sentences but still convey meaning.
- ▶ A sentence may also contain many ‘complete thoughts’.

Nelson, G. & Greenbaum, S. (2016). *An introduction to English Grammar*. London: Routledge, p. 122.

# DEFINITION OF A SENTENCE

- ▶ FORMAL DEFINITION- A string of words beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop (Nelson & Greenbaum (2016))
- ▶ NOTE: This is inadequate; sentences end in question marks, exclamation marks; only applicable to written, not spoken sentences,
- ▶ Hence, difficult to define a sentence.
- ▶ Grammarians are concerned with the grammatical form.
- ▶ Users are able to recognize and specify the patterns of sentences.
- ▶ Combinations of words that conform to those patterns are the grammatical sentences.

Nelson, G. & Greenbaum, S. (2016). *An introduction to English Grammar*. London: Routledge p. 122.

# DEFINITION OF A CLAUSE

- ▶ A clause is a sentence like construction contained within a sentence.
- ▶ He slept when he arrived home.
- ▶ when he arrived home is a sentence like construction- can be analyzed in terms of the major sentence elements (subject, verb, adverbial);
- ▶ It has the subordinating conjunction 'when- hence subordinate.
- ▶ While you were away they took care of your property.
- ▶ The children were hospitalized because they developed health complications.

# SENTENCES AND CLAUSES

- ▶ A SENTENCE that does not contain another clause within it is a simple sentence.
- ▶ The president appointed a new cabinet.
- ▶ If it contains one or more clauses, it is a multiple sentence (compound or complex)
- ▶ Students attend all the classes when they start the semester because it is mandatory by policy.
- ▶ (How many clauses are in this sentence)

# TYPES OF SIMPLE SENTENCES

## Sentence **Types**

**Declarative**

I enjoy studying English.

**Interrogative**

Have you eaten lunch?

**Exclamatory**

What a terrible idea!

**Imperative**

Don't walk through that door.



From: <https://youtu.be/sYDtQVGAj4s> (Accesses on 9/10/2024)

# DECLARATIVES

- ▶ Basic sentence types
- ▶ Subject verb structure.
- ▶ Regardless of other sentence elements that may follow.
- ▶ The weather is harsh.
- ▶ The weather is harsh during winter.
- ▶ We did not enjoy that performance

# INTERROGATIVES

- ▶ YES-NO Questions
- ▶ Begin with a verb
- ▶ Require subject -operator inversion
- ▶ Do the mechanics receive enough pay?
- ▶ Also known as polar questions- they need a yes/no answer
- ▶ Other ways:
- ▶ Certainly, perhaps, I don't know, I think so.

# INTERROGATIVES

- ▶ WH-questions
- ▶ Begin with an interrogative word or phrase.
- ▶ *Why did you arrive so late?*
- ▶ *When does the shop open?*
- ▶ Called so because most of the interrogative words begin with wh-
- ▶ (how-an exception)
- ▶ The interrogative word in wh-question represents a missing piece of information the hearer should supply.
- ▶ Also require subject- operator inversion.
- ▶ *Who has taken my car?*

# INTERROGATIVES

## ▶ DECLARATIVE QUESTIONS

- ▶ Have the form of a declarative sentence but the force of a question.
- ▶ Declarative subject-verb order but;
- ▶ their interrogative force is signalled by a rising intonation in speech and,
- ▶ By a question mark in writing.
- ▶ You have the password?
- ▶ You take coffee?
- ▶ You are travelling next week?

# INTERROGATIVES

- ▶ ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS-
- ▶ Present two or more choices and the hearer is expected to reply with one of them.
- ▶ One type of alternative questions resemble the form of yes-no questions.
- ▶ Should the government raise its revenue by raising taxes or by taking loans?
- ▶ The other type resembles wh- questions.
- ▶ Where do you want to go, Iran or Japan?

# INTERROGATIVES

## ▶ TAG QUESTIONS

- ▶ Attached to sentences that are not interrogatives.
- ▶ Invite the hearer to respond in agreement with the speaker.
- ▶ The children should sleep early, *shouldn't they?*
- ▶ Fix yourself some tea, *won't you?*
- ▶ They have a form of yes-no questions.
- ▶ Consist of an operator and subject of the main sentence.
- ▶ Negative if the sentence is positive; positive if the sentence is negative.
- ▶ In imperative sentences, the subject is *you* and the operator is *will*.

# IMPERATIVE SENTENCES

- ▶ They are used to give directions.
- ▶ The verb remains in its base form.
- ▶ The subject (you) is missing but it is understood; recovered from the context
- ▶ Go out and bring me some water.
- ▶ Boil the vegetables.
- ▶ To read effectively, stay in a quite place.

# EXCLAMATIVES

- ▶ Begin with *what* or *how*.
- ▶ *What* introduces noun phrases
- ▶ *How* is used for all other purposes.
- ▶ *What a good show it was!*
- ▶ *What a mess you have made!*
- ▶ *How hard she works!*
- ▶ *How time flies!*

They express strong feelings

Indicate the extent to which the speaker is impressed by something,

*What* and *how* are intensifiers expressing a high degree.

# COMPOUND SENTENCES

- ▶ Compound sentences contain two or more clauses that could stand on their own.
- ▶ Joined by coordinators. (and, or, but)
- ▶ She is a shrewd debater and everyone recognizes that.
- ▶ They can also be linked by semicolon- juxtaposed side by side.
- ▶ She is a shrewd debater; everyone recognizes that.
- ▶ Repetition of identical expressions across coordinated clauses can be avoided by ellipsis:
- ▶ The adults ate chicken, the teenagers hamburgers and the youngest children pizza.

# COMPLEX SENTENCES AND SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

- ▶ A complex sentence is a multiple sentence in which one or more subordinate clauses are embedded.
- ▶ The man saw that carelessness can create a big mess.
- ▶ I am happy that you have finally visited me.
- ▶ A complex can be analyzed in terms of sentence elements :
- ▶ Everybody (SUBJECT) knows (VERB) that she is a committed Christian (OBJECT).

# SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

- ▶ **NOMINAL:**
- ▶ That clauses
- ▶ Wh- clauses
- ▶ Relative clauses
- ▶ Bare infinitive
- ▶ To infinitive
- ▶ -ing infinitive
- ▶ Verbless clause

## ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

# NOMINAL SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

- ▶ They approximate the function of the noun phrase
- ▶ Major categories:
- ▶ *That* -clauses
- ▶ Subordinate interrogative clauses.
- ▶ Subordinate exclamative clauses
- ▶ Nominal relative clauses
- ▶ To-infinitive
- ▶ -ing clauses
- ▶ Verbless clauses

From Quirk, R. et, al. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*.  
London: Pearson Education ltd.

# That- clauses

- ▶ A "that clause" in grammar is a type of subordinate clause that begins with the word "that"
- ▶ Consider the following:
- ▶ How strange it is that the children travelled on their own.
- ▶ I noticed that she submitted two copies of her proposal.
- ▶ I know that it is late.
- ▶ That clauses have various grammatical functions:

# That clause

- ▶ Subject : *That we are now fighting* is shocking.
- ▶ object-: I noticed *that she spoke French fluently*.
- ▶ Appositive: Your advise, *that I visit a specialist*, is fully appreciated.
- ▶ Subject complement: We are glad *that you came for the party*.
- ▶ Note: It is common to find ‘that’ omission;
- ▶ I know (that) she is a teacher.
- ▶ She thinks (that) she knows everything.

# Wh- interrogative

- ▶ It occurs in the whole range available to the nominal that- clause:

Subject- *How the book will sell* depends on its rating.

Direct object: I can't imagine *what they will do to the opposition leaders*.

Subject complement: The problem is *who will take over the company's leadership*.

Appositive: The initial concern, *why he visited the stranger at night*, has not been addressed.

Adjectival complementation: I am not sure *which team will win the match*.

Prepositional complement: They did not consult us on *whose names should be submitted*.

# Nominal relative clauses

- ▶ They resemble wh- clauses in that they are introduced by a wh-element.
- ▶ On the other hand, they are more like noun phrases (can be concrete or abstract)
- ▶ We can paraphrase them by noun phrases containing a noun head with general reference that is modified by a relative clause.
- ▶ *Whoever did that* deserves some punishment.
- ▶ That person who did that.....
- ▶ I took what they offered me.
- ▶ I took the things that they offered me.

# Nominal relative clauses

- ▶ They display number concord with the verb of the sentence.
- ▶ Whatever **book** you find there **is** good to read.
- ▶ Whatever **books** you find there **are** good to read.
- ▶ Subject: *What I want* is a cup of hot cocoa.
- ▶ Direct object: You should see *whoever deals with complaints*.
- ▶ Indirect object: He gave *whoever asked for it* a copy of his latest paper.
- ▶ Subject complement: September is *when the semester begins*.
- ▶ Object complement: You can visit me *whenever you like*.
- ▶ Appositive: I will send the fees; *which will cater for the entire year*, next month.
- ▶ Prepositional complement: You should buy *whatever you like*.

# TO-INFINITIVE

- ▶ Called non-finite-as they have a non-finite verb.
- ▶ May function as:
- ▶ Subject: *To remain objective in politics* is not easy.
- ▶ Direct object: He likes *to read*.
- ▶ Subject complement: The best action is *to ignore his ranting*.
- ▶ Appositive: Your ambition, *to become a lawyer*, requires that you read a lot.
- ▶ Adjectival complementation: I am happy *to see you*.

# -ING INFINITIVE

- ▶ Nominal -ing clauses (or more fully, nominal -ing participle clauses) may function as:
  - ▶ Subject: *Reading novels* expands one's worldview.
  - ▶ Direct object: He enjoys *playing musical instruments*.
  - ▶ Subject complement: Her first job had been *selling phones*.
  - ▶ Appositive: His current research, *developing organic fertilizer from organic matter*, is time consuming.
  - ▶ Adjectival complementation: They are busy *blaming each other*.
  - ▶ Prepositional complement: I am responsible for *closing the office*.

# Bare infinitive clauses

- ▶ The nominal bare (without to) is severely limited in its functions.
- ▶ It may be the subject complement or (rarely) subject in a pseudo cleft sentence.
- ▶ Subject complement: What the plan does is ensure a fair medical cover for all.
- ▶ The best thing you can do now is write an apology to the supervisor.
- ▶ Subject: Turn off the alarm is what I did.

# VERBLESS CLAUSES

- ▶ The nominal verbless clause is more debatable category than the other nominal clauses.
- ▶ The constructions, although superficially noun phrases, they have some of the semantic and structural characteristics of clauses.
- ▶ A friend in need is a friend indeed.
- ▶ Wall to wall carpets in every room is their dream.

# ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

- ▶ They function as adverbs
- ▶ They prepared an impeachment motion, *what is more worrying is that his close allies were on the fore front.*
- ▶ *If we look at it from an historical point of view,* they have no right to the territory.
- ▶ *As far as the economy is concerned,* the next six months are critical.
- ▶ We have no electricity *because there is a power failure.*
- ▶ *\,* you have the right to remain silent.
- ▶ Your coat is *where you left it.*
- ▶ Susan sees her father *when he goes to Korea.*

# SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- ▶ Common linkage- subordination and coordination; however, these linkages may mingle at lower levels.
- ▶ A compound sentence may have subordination within one of its coordinated clauses.
- ▶ Mite specialists have identified 30,000 species of mites but they believe that these represent only a tenth of the total number. (Nelson & Greenbaum, 2016).
- ▶ The second coordinated clause is a complex sentence.

Nelson, G. & Greenbaum, S. (2016). *An introduction to English grammar*. London: Routledge.

# SENTENCE COMPLEXITY

- ▶ *but* introduces a coordinated clause and *that* introduces a subordinate clause within it.
- ▶ The *that*- clause is a **subordinate** to the *but*- clause and not in the sentence as a whole;
- ▶ The *but*-clause is **superordinate** to the subordinate *that* clause.
- ▶ Identify the clauses in the sentences below:
- ▶ Police refused to say what they would do if the protesting students did not return to the compound.
- ▶ The embassy advised the citizens to avoid visiting that country and they warned them of impending danger if they chose to visit.

# SUMMARY

- ▶ CLAUSES= SENTENCES
- ▶ TYPES OF SENTENCES
- ▶ SIMPLE- DECLARATIVE- INTERROGATIVE- IMPERATIVE- EXCLAMATIVE
- ▶ COMPOUND
- ▶ COMPLEX
- ▶ SUBORDINATE CLAUSES
- ▶ - NOMINAL
- ▶ ADVERBIAL

# REFERENCES

- ▶ Nelson, G. & Greenbaum, S. (2016). *An introduction to English grammar*. London: Routledge.
- ▶ Quirk, R. et, al. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Pearson Education ltd.

# NEXT LESSON

- ▶ GRAMMATICAL/ SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS