



THE "CLAUSES" AS A MEANS OF UNDERSTANDING THE TYPES OF SENTENCES AND THEIR COMPLEMENTS FOR LEARNERS OF ESL

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INST. DR. AYAD ENAD KHALAF

THE DIRECTORATE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND ISLAMIC STUDIES,
BAGHDAD. IRAQ.



ABSTRACT

The Clauses, with all its kinds, are important terms in structuring the sentence and its complement which are the base of any language. Language users normally use with their sentences some syntactic constructions in order to give additional meanings for some parts of the sentence. The classification of clauses into main and subordinate and how these two types can replace their positions is a problematic for the learners of English because it depends neither on the length nor on the structure of every clause, but on the principle of dependency. The principle of "dependency" is an essential principle in the definition of "sentence" by Bloomfield (1933) when he considered it as "the largest independent syntactic form which cannot be embedded in any other syntactic form by any grammatical rule". From Bloomfield point of view, we can understand the importance of knowing types of clauses, main and subordinate, and how these two terms are important in the classification of sentences and sentential complements, and how a clause can stand for a sentence. Therefore, this paper aims at explaining the syntactic similarities and differences between the different kinds of sentences and their complements when they are seen from the structural measure, which clearly shows the differences between the main and the subordinate clauses.

Keywords

Clause, sentence, complement.

استخدام العبارات كوسيلة لفهم أنواع الجمل ومكملاتها لمتعلمي اللغة

الانكليزية كلغة ثانوية

مر. د. اياد عناد خلف

دائرة التعليم الديني والدراسات الإسلامية/ بغداد

الملخص

إن العبارات، بكل أنواعها، هي مصطلحات مهمة في تركيب الجملة ومكملاتها التي تشكل أساس أي لغة، لذا فمن الطبيعي أن يستعين مستخدموا أي لغة في جملهم ببعض التراكيب النحوية لإعطاء معانٍ إضافية لبعض أجزاء الجملة. إن تصنيف العبارات إلى رئيسية وثانوية وكيف يمكن لهذين النوعين أن يستبدلا مكانها تعتبر إشكالية بالنسبة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية لأنها لا تعتمد على طول أو بنية كل عبارة، ولكن تعتمد على مبدأ "الاعتمادية". وهذا المبدأ هو مبدأ أساسي اعتمده بلومفيلد (١٩٣٣) في تعريف "الجملة" التي اعتبرها "أكبر صيغة نحوية مستقلة لا يمكن تضمينها في أي صيغة نحوية أخرى بأي قاعدة نحوية. من خلال وجهة نظر العالم بلومفيلد يمكننا أن نفهم أهمية معرفة أنواع العبارات الرئيسية والثانوية، وكيف يمكن أن يكون لهذين المصطلحين أهمية في تصنيف الجمل والمكملات المرتبطة بها، وكيف يمكن للعبارة أن تحل محل الجملة. لذلك، يهدف هذا البحث إلى توضيح التشابهات والاختلافات النحوية بين أنواع الجمل المختلفة ومكملاتها بالنظر إليها من المقياس التركيبي الذي يبين بوضوح الاختلافات بين العبارات الرئيسية والثانوية.

المصطلحات الرئيسية

العبارات، الجمل، مكملات الجمل.

1. Introduction

The aim of this article, on the one hand, is to present a brief account of two important terms in language; the sentence and its complement as universal linguistic phenomena found in languages and to shed light on the literature review of these two terms in English. On the other hand, this article will provide a survey of how those terms have been dealt with and classified according to the types and the number of clauses that structure both of them. Different views provided by traditional and modern grammarians will also be one of the principal "missions" of this article.

This article will shed light on the importance of clauses in the classification of sentences and complements. Moreover, this article will concern itself with the ways of distinguishing the main clauses from the subordinate clauses in the sentences from semantic and syntactic points of view. This will help to understand how complement levels can be characterised as the same levels related to sentence types such as; simple sentences, compound sentences, ...etc.

The aforementioned issues strongly encourage this article to unlock the underlying tools behind the ideology and find answers to the following questions:

- 1- How can learners recognize the kinds of sentences?
- 2- How can learners differentiate between different kinds of complements?
- 3- How can learners control the use of sentences and their complements?

2. General overview on the "sentence"

Sentence has many definitions various according to its different aspects. Examining some of these definitions shows that scholars have differed in the way they look at the sentence into three groups. The first group, traditional grammarians, Huddleston (1984), **Fish (2011)**, Crystal (2008), Bussmann



(1996), have asserted on the grammatical aspect of the sentence by defining the sentence as:

- a) A word or group of words.
- b) Organised by definite rules.
- c) Formed the largest independent unit of grammar.
- d) Have a logical relationship between these items.

Other group of scholars, Jespersen (1924), Bloomfield (1933), asserts on the principle of independency in their definitions of a 'sentence' and defined it as:

- a) Stand alone as a complete utterance.
- b) Cannot be embedded in any other syntactic form by any grammatical rule.
- c) Independent clause which stands by itself as a main clause.
- d) It is not a subordinate clause which depends on the main clause.

In the same way, we can find many definitions that emphasize the principle of independence and most of these linguistic definitions of the sentence, as David Crystal (2008:432) argues, are influenced by the definition of Leonard Bloomfield.

Some other definitions, Lanham (1979), Rothstein (2009), look at sentence from the 'meaning' point of view. They defined it as:

- a) An organized pattern of thought.
- b) Conveys meaning to and can be responded to or is part of a response.

It becomes clear that a sentence is not only a group of words arranged syntactically but also a unit arranged semantically with a relatively complete sense/meaning. To conclude, there are innumerable definitions of sentence. These definitions either define the sentence from the semantic point of view which characterizes sentence as 'the expression of a complete thought' or from

the logico-analytical point of view preferring its detailed structural descriptions in terms of contemporary linguistic analysis. After introducing the characteristics of the 'sentence', it will be more useful now to introduce in the next section the ways by which one can differentiate the 'sentence' from other terms in language.

3. The "Sentence" in view with other terms in language

For the purpose of better understanding for the characteristics of "sentence", it is useful to compare and contrast it with other similar units in language such as: the 'clause', the 'phrase', and the 'text' to see how scholars deal with the term 'sentence'. The general difference between the 'sentence' and the 'text' is that the sentence is considered as the smallest unit of language which can stand alone and function as a relatively complete structure for a definite communicative purpose. More than that, a sentence is appropriate inter-sentential relations which give rise to various types of texts. A 'sentence' can construct larger texts of speech or writing such as; conversations, speech, letters, articles, plays, novels ...etc.

Huddleston (1984:18) looks at the difference between a 'sentence' and a 'text' from the point of view of the components that constitute them. He shows that the main difference between a sentence and a text (which consists of a sequence of sentences) is that a sentence consists of parts that are connected by definite connections but none of them can function independently. These connections between the parts of a sentence help to identify whether each of them can form a sentence or not. Moreover, these connections will enable the users in formulating specific rules to distinguish whether a sentence is grammatically correct or not. The 'text', on the other hand, has neither the same connections found between the parts of a sentence, nor it has a random juxtaposition of sentences; it is built on specific relations between sentences and

thus, the study of these relations is the concern of a different field, not syntax, but 'discourse analysis' or 'text-linguistics' (Huddleston (1984:18).

The other distinction, which is more related to the topic of this article, is between the "sentence" and the "clause". Crystal (1997:220) shows that a 'clause' consists of five elements, subject, verb, object, complement and adverb. Although the clause is similar to the sentence in their construction that both of them may have a subject and a predicate alone or in construction with one or more objects, adjuncts, etc., the clause, for Huddleston, cannot be a sentence if it is a part of a larger syntactic construction (Huddleston, 1984:20). In other words, the clause can be a sentence if it gets its dependency from other constructions. The principle of dependency, in this discussion, refers to whether a clause is a main or subordinate clause. For more explanation about this point, let's examine the following two examples.

- 1) a. *The bus came late yesterday*, so John didn't attend the lesson
- b. Because *the bus came late yesterday*, John didn't attend the lesson.

The clause "*The bus came late yesterday*" can stand for a sentence in (a) because it is a main clause, but it is not a sentence in (b) because it is a subordinate clause and depends on the main clause which is more important. As we saw above, the sentence has the form of a clause but it is an independent clause. Huddleston doesn't state that the sentence 'consists of a clause, but instead he claims that a clause forms a sentence in order to avoid any implication that the clause is a constituent of the sentence as in example (1.a and b)(Huddleston, 1984:20).

4. Sentence types

The basic sentence types are various, but they can be restricted to three main different lines; form, function and position. Every one of these lines will be explained in detail to show the differences between them.

4.1. "Form" types of sentences

Formally, sentences can be classified into four basic structures which include; the simple, the compound, the complex, and the compound-complex sentence. This classification depends on the number and types of clauses used in these sentences. These clauses are linked together by means of "coordination" and "subordination" such as; a semicolon, and, but, so, for...etc. Formally, Bussmann (1996) classifies the sentences according to the positions of the verb which are important in English. Thus, a verb initial position is a marker for interrogatives or imperatives. Functionally, Bussmann (1996) classifies sentences into four basic types: statements, interrogatives, imperatives and conditionals. These types are related to different factors such as: communicative-pragmatic functions, word order, mood, and intonation. The third classification is based on the degree of complexity of the syntactic structure of a sentence, by which sentences can be divided into simple, compound, and complex sentences.

A simple sentence, for Huddleston, contains only one clause that is a main clause. This definition for 'simple sentence' depends on the number of main clauses of a sentence. Similarly, Bussmann (1996) gives the same content of the definition of Huddleston but in another way because he considers that every finite verb can constitute a main clause. For Bussmann (1996), a simple sentence may contain only one finite verb plus obligatory and optional constituents. Thus, to decide whether a sentence is a simple or not is to look at the number of the main verbs it has, for example:



- 2) The water is boiling.
- 3) Feeling the desire of our friend at their early departure, we left the birthday party without saying good-bye to all the other guests.

Looking at these sentences, we find that both of them are simple sentences in spite of the differences in the length between them. Both of them are simple sentences because they have the structure of a simple sentence: one subject (word/group) and one main verb (word/group).

Sharing the same view of simple sentences, Huddleston (1984:378) and Crystal (2008:96) define a 'compound sentence' as a sentence containing two or more main clauses, while for Bussmann (1996), a 'compound sentence' may contain at least two finite verbs, with clauses being joined through coordination. Crystal (2008:96) shows that these clauses are connected to one another with a co-ordinating conjunction, such as: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet* and *so*, for example:

- 4) The students waited for the teacher, but he came late.
- 5) The students waited for the bus, but the bus came late, so he called me, but I didn't answer his call.

In the first compound sentence, there are two main clauses, but in the second one there are four main clauses. Every one of the above main clauses can stand as a sentence by itself and express a complete thought.

The third type of sentences is the 'complex sentence' which has higher frequency both structurally and functionally as compared to compound sentences. In grammar, 'complex sentence' is a term which in its most general application describes a sentence consisting of more than one clause. For Bussmann (1996), a 'complex sentence' contains at least two finite verbs, with all additional (dependent) clauses being joined to the main (=independent)

clause via subordination. Similar to Huddleston (1984:378), Crystal (2008:94) gives a more definite and narrower sense for the 'complex sentence' when he argues that it refers to a sentence consisting of a main clause and at least one subordinate clause. The main clause and subordinate clause in a 'complex sentence' are connected by subordinating conjunctions such as; *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, though, unless, until, when, whenever and while* or relative pronouns such as: *that, who, which, what, whom* and *whose*, for example:

6) Because the bus was late, Tom didn't attend the lesson.

Main clause: Tom didn't attend the lesson.

Subordinate clause: Because the bus was late.

7) They have a house that looks like a palace.

Main clause: They have a house.

Subordinate clause: That looks like a palace.

As we see from the above examples, the clauses in complex sentences are not structurally equal, although they express related thoughts. The thoughts of the subordinate clause is related and connected to the thought in the main clause, and the conjunctions that we use to connect these two clauses show how the subordinate clause is dependent on the main clause. Huddleston (1984:379) states that in the most central cases of complex sentences, the subordinate clause is a constituent of the superordinate clause, for example:

8) Tom prepared the food that they had ordered.

The clause *that they had ordered* is modifier within the NP *the food that they had ordered* – and hence a constituent of the clause of which that NP is object. Similarly in:

9) I think he knows he is dying.

The subordinate *he is dying* is a complement to the verb *knows* and hence a constituent of the superordinate *he knows he is dying*. The clause *he knows he's dying* is superordinate to *he's dying* but at the same time it is subordinate to *I think he knows he's dying*.

The fourth type of sentence is the 'compound-complex sentence' or the 'mixed sentence' as it is called sometimes. This kind of sentences has two or more main clauses with one or more subordinate clauses. To see the types of this kind of sentences, let's examine the following examples of compound- complex sentences:

10) Because the bus was late, Tom didn't attend the lesson and I didn't see him.

11) I entered the class after the teacher came, but Tom didn't join the class.

12) Tom will catch the bus, if he wakes up early and he will lose the bus, if he wakes up late.

The compound-complex sentence in (10) has a subordinate clause (*Because the bus was late*) and compound sentence (*Tom didn't attend the lesson and I didn't see him*). For Rzayev et al. (2007:25), compound sentence can become a "compound-complex sentence" when/if one or more subordinated clauses are added to it. In example (11), the compound-complex sentence has a simple sentence (*Tom didn't join the class*) and a complex sentence (*I entered the class after teacher came*). In example (12) the compound-complex sentence has two complex sentences (*Tom will catch the bus if he wakes up early*) and (*He will lose the bus if he wakes up late*). Thus, from the above examples, it can be concluded that there are different ways of structuring a compound-complex sentence such as; using a subordinate clause with a compound sentence as in (10), using a simple sentence with a complex sentence as in (11), and by using

more than one complex sentence connected by a conjunction such as “and” as in (12). As we saw in the various types of sentences above, a sentence may consist of one or more clauses, mains or subordinates, e.g., example (13) consists of four clauses.

13) Tom will catch the bus /if he wakes up early/ and /he will lose the bus /if he wakes up late.

As we explained early in this section, every conjunction we use to connect any two clauses shows not only that a subordinate clause is dependent on the main clause which is more important, but also shows the kind of the relationship whether it was additional or conditional relationship. In the above example, the word ‘*if*’ shows the relationship (conditional) between the ideas constructed by the first and the second clauses. In the same way, the word ‘*and*’ shows the relationship (one of additional) between ideas constructed by the two complex clauses ...etc.

4.2. Functional/communicative types of sentences

This type of classification has got different subdivisions from different scholars. At the same time we find sentences are subdivided under the functional level into: declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamatory, others assure the functional classification of sentences into; statement, question, command and exclamatory types and make the formal classification into declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative types (David Crystal (2008:433). Crystal (1997:218) shows that some modern grammars especially those which work within the frame work of speech acts, recognise a much larger range of functions such as; J. Austin (1962); Searle (1976) who distinguishes five basic types of speech acts: representatives, commissives, declarations, directives and expressives.

In the ‘declaratives sentences’, the subject precedes the verb, as illustrated in example (14) below:

14) Tom gave his mother a present for her birthday.

Rzayev et al. (2007:25) show that sentences, which are declaratives in their forms, may be used pragmatically for other functions such as; questioning or expressing requests, e.g.,

15) I would like to know if you want to visit Sultan Ahmed Mosque with me.

(Can you come with me to Sultan Ahmed Mosque?)

The second type is ‘interrogatives sentences’ are formally found in one of two ways, as illustrated in the next two examples:

16) Did Mark give Tom a digital watch for his birthday? (*Yes-no* Interrogative)

17) What did Mark give Tom for his birthday? (*Wh-* Interrogative)

In the above examples, the yes-no interrogative construction, in (16), has an operator in front of the subject, while in *wh-* interrogative sentence in (17), the *wh-* element is positioned initially. An interrogative sentence may also function as a statement, directive, suggestion or as exclamation, for example:

18) Why don’t you visit Sultan Ahmed Mosque?

(Suggestion: it is better for you to visit Sultan Ahmed Mosque)

The third type is the ‘imperatives sentences’ are normally have a verb in the base form and the subject (you) is not overt, as illustrated in example (19) below:

19) Open the door, it is very hot here.

The discourse function of 'imperatives' is often, but not always, that of directive.

The last type of sentences is the 'exclamatory' which have a more restricted definition in Quirk grammar as they refer to the constructions which begin with *what* or *how* without a following inversion of subject and verb, e.g.,

20) What a beautiful house it is!

21) How nice this house!

These sentences are called 'exclamatives' because, from the semantic point of view, they have the function of expressing feelings of the speaker towards an action. Although exclamative sentences have the same shape with interrogatives (both of them start with '*what*' or '*how*') but, in the 'exclamatives', the sentences have initial phrases introduced by *what* or *how* and the verb usually agrees with the subject in number. This form of the verb order expresses strong feeling and ends with an exclamation mark, as in the following:

22) What a beautiful house he bought last year!

While the order in the interrogatives is (what/how+verb+subject), as in (23);

23) What did he bought last year?

4.3. Basic sentence patterns

The third classification is based on obligatoriness of various components (constituents) of a sentence such as the subject, verb, complement and adverbials. This classification also reveals the basic sentence types. These components are "five functional categories of clause constituents" with three of them further subcategorized (Quirk et al., 1985:750), as follows: Subject (S),

Verb (V), Object (O) (direct (O_d) and indirect (O_i)), Complement (subject complement (C_s), object complement (C_o)), and Adjunct (subject-related (A_s) or object-related (A_o)).

Based on these five combinations, English sentences have the following seven functional patterns:

1. SV Subject-verb
2. SVO Subject-verb-object
3. SVC Subject-verb- complement
4. SVA Subject-verb- adverb
5. SVOO Subject-verb-indirect object-direct object
6. SVOC Subject-verb-direct object-complement
7. SVOA Subject-verb-direct object-adverb

Regarding the complement and its position in sentences, both Quirk et al., (1985) and Crystal (1997) show in their classifications that there are two main kinds of complements; subject complement and direct object complement, as in the following examples:

- 24) a. John was *a football player*.
b. They selected John *a leader for the team*.

In (a) *a football player* is the subject complement that completes the meaning of the subject and comes after the verb (be). In (b), *a leader for the team* is the direct object complement because it came after the direct object to complete its meaning. After giving the important classifications of sentences, let the focus on the main issue of the present research topic which is complementation with its types in English.

5. Complement as an obligatory member

As pointed out earlier, a sentence is made up of different grammatical and functional categories on the basis of their shared semantic and syntactic properties. In traditional grammar, complement is a functional category of the sentence. Ralph (1958:133) shows that the 'complement' has the role of expressing the topic of actions, facts and opinions. Faulhabe (2011:24), from his part, asserts that 'complements' can fulfil general semantic functions such as introducing the topic of an action or can function as a point of reference. The next section will show how complements take the properties of their sentences that they relate to.

5.1. Word level complement

Complement levels can be characterised as the same levels related to sentence. Moreover, a complement may be a word, a phrase or a sentence of different types as in the following examples:

- 25) a. (^x I think [^yso^y]^x).
- b. (^x I think [^y that you may be right^y]^x).
- c. (^x I think [^y that Tom will stay and John will leave^y]^x).
- d. (^x I think [^y that you can do it {^zif you try^z}^y]^x).
- e. (^x I think [^y that I entered the class {^zafter the teacher came^z} but I didn't recognise him^y]^x).

In the above examples, the complement took different shapes. In (a) the complement is a one word only (so) while in (b) it is a simple sentence clause containing one subject and one predicate. Looking at (c) shows that the complement is a compound sentence clause containing two simple clauses; *Tom will stay* and *John will leave*. Sentence (d) is an example of a complex level

complement. In the structure (d), the clause beginning with Z is subordinate to the clause beginning with Y, which in turn is subordinate to the clause beginning with X. Both Y and Z which contain complementizers (that and if) are dependent clauses, while X is the independent clause. The last example (e) contains a compound-complex level complement. In it there are two main clauses *I entered the class* and *I didn't recognise him* and one subordinate clause *after teacher came*. Thus, it can be said that complements have different levels and functions. This article will focus on the detailed operation of complementation: structure and types.

5.2. Complementation: structure and Types

The term complementation (as distinct from complement) as put forward by Quirk et al. (1985), refers to the function of a part of a phrase or clause which follows a word and completes the specification of the meaning relationship which that word implies. Complementation also overlaps with other functions, such as adverbials and modifiers. Various sentence structures were characterized by differences in complementation in terms of object, complement or adjunct. To see the differences between the need of some parts of sentence for a complement, a distinction must be made between two cases, as in the following examples:

26) a. Tom was writing.

b. Tom was writing a letter to his mother.

We can consider (a) as a complete sentence although there is no object because it denotes an activity. This activity is answering the question *what was he doing?* But in (b) the sentence is answering another question which is *what was he writing? Or to whom was he writing?* Only in this sense *a letter to his mother* is a complement. Thus, if we add something to the activity it will denote *what you are involved in, What you are doing, What you are eating, What you*

are reading ...etc. in the first case of (a) the activity doesn't need a complement because the complement is inside the verb itself denoting an activity of the progressive present. Then, we can postulate that 'complementation' function is 'additive of information' that comes in various kinds.

It is more useful to draw attention to three properties of complements which are given by Huddleston (1984:263); (a) the occurrence of a complement of a given kind depends on the presence of a verb of an appropriate subclass, (b) complements are obligatory with certain verbs, (c) prototypical complements are realised by NPs or AdjPs. Dixon (2006), from his part, provides four criteria to recognize a grammatical constituent as a complement clause (for more details see: Dixon (2006:15)). Examining these properties shows that the complement clause has the internal structure of a clause and should be marked in the same way as in main clauses. The complement clause has much the same grammatical properties of clauses because it may have a subject, predicate, object and an adverb.

Though we use different clauses in our sentences knowingly or unknowingly, but identifying the type of clauses with their specific functions in the sentences will help us to produce effective sentences because knowing the properties of clauses is important thing to distinguish between the different types of sentences and complements. Moreover, this knowledge can help in deciding whether a clause can stand for a sentence or not. With a clause, one can use correct and understandable sentences and to avoid incorrectly using dependent clauses as sentence fragments. Knowing these cases helps in creating sentences with their complements efficiently and to produce our speech accurately and correctly.

Conclusion

This article provided a survey of how sentences and their complements have been dealt with and classified according to the type and the number of the clauses that structure both of them. Moreover, the classification of clauses into main and subordinate showed how these two types can replace their positions because it depends neither on the length nor on the structure of every clause, but on the principle of dependency. The knowledge of clauses, main and subordinate, is an important thing in the classification of sentences and sentential complements and showed how a clause can stand for a sentence.

Additionally, **this article focused on how a sentence is defined in three different ways; the first one looks at the sentence from grammatical point of view. The second one** asserts on the principle of independency in the completeness of a sentence and the third one which emphasise on the factor of `meaning` that it may appear in a sentence. To conclude, there are innumerable definitions of sentence, and these definitions either define the sentence from the semantic point of view which characterizes sentence as ‘the expression of a complete thought’ or from the logico-analytical point of view preferring its detailed structural descriptions in terms of contemporary linguistic analysis. **Finally, this article showed how** complements have different levels and functions and how these levels depends on the number and the types of clauses in the structure of the complement.

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