

Embedded Sentences and Full Verbs

Japen Sarage, M.A.

Universitas Ahmad Dahlan Yogyakarta

Abstract: *English words can be classified into grammatical and content words. The first class implies those with no referent meaning such as prepositions, modals, auxiliaries, connectors, and some determiners whereas the second involves the ones with clear meanings such as nouns, full verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. The term full verb refers to the verb that carries referential meaning. This is different from modals and auxiliaries, which carry grammatical meaning and depend on full verbs.*

A content verb plays an important role in syntax. It determines the presence of other elements in a sentence. The verb eat, for example, requires the presence of an animate subject and an object. When two different content verbs appear in a sentence they may bear the same sentence element, which can be embedded.

The non-finite clause in Leaving the room, she slammed the door. shows an embedded part of the subject she. The sentence is originated from When she was leaving the room, she slammed the door. The two content verbs bear the same subject she. Two content verbs may appear in the followings: She let him go. I had my eyes tested. Those sentences show embedded parts with different functions. This paper tries to discuss an English full verb, which appear together with another full verbs allowing an embedding process.

Key words: embeded sentence, content verb, sentence, clause.

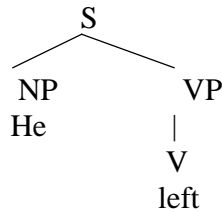
A. Introduction.

The classification of English words into content and grammatical words or into open and closed classes i.e. those words listed in dictionary as having a base and those words showing grammatical function (Quirk, 1987:68) has an implication of treating a verb into two different things. While most word classes belong to one category such as a noun, adjective, and an adverb belonging to an open class word and a preposition, pronoun, determiner, and a conjunction belonging to a closed class word, a verb may fall into the open and closed classes. The verbs, which fall into the open class, are full verbs whereas the verbs, which belong to the closed class, are modal verbs and primary verbs. This fact has affected the way in which a sentence is analyzed syntactically.

In English syntax, the basic structure of a sentence is a noun phrase NP and a verb phrase VP (Gelderen, 2010:42) where the NP functions as the subject of the sentence and the VP shows more complexity than the subject. The complexity of VP can be illustrated in the following:

(1) He left.

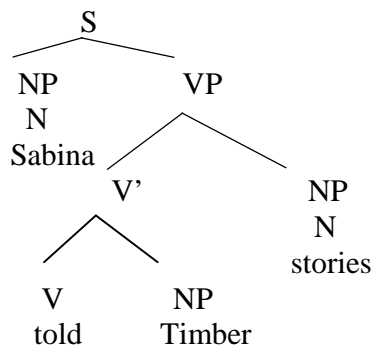
(Gelderen, 2010:43)



In the above sentence the NP is the pronoun *he* since the idea of NP is something built around noun where the pronoun refers to a noun. The VP in the above sentence is a verb *left*, where other membership is possible as long as it accomplishes the verb. Consider the following.

(2) Sabina told Timber stories.

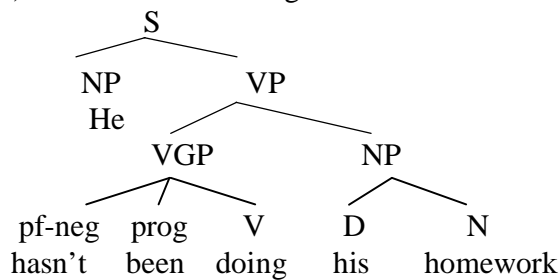
(Gelderen, 2010:125)



In (2) the VP has three members *told*, *Timber*, and *stories*. In this case the VP has a verb and two NPs as members. Besides a VP has a verb and NPs as members, it can also have other verbs i.e. primary verbs as members. This is exemplified in the following.

(3) He hasn't been doing his homework.

(Gelderen, 2010:114)



The above VP has four members. They are an NP, two primary verbs perfect negative *hasn't* and progressive prog. *been*, and the full verb *doing*.

Amidst the complexity of verb, there is simplicity of sentence. A subject may have more than one VPs and the VP may have more than one subjects. These things can be considered as the result of embedding process or the inclusion of one unit as part of another unit (Quirk, 2006:37). The sentence:

(4) John and Jane works.

is considered to originate from the sentences:

(5) John works. and

(6) Jane works.

This fact leads to a complex analysis since the basic sentence structure is an NP and a VP. Any such constructions can be considered as a sentence or a clause.

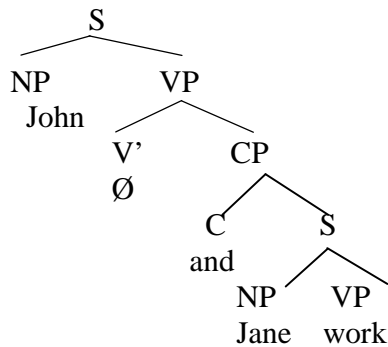
This paper tries to discuss the English full verbs, which appear together with other full verbs. The discussion involves the comparison between the full verbs and the primary verbs. The comparison we may find certain characteristics of full verbs.

B. Embedded Sentence.

An embedded sentence such as in (4) can be diagrammed into the followings

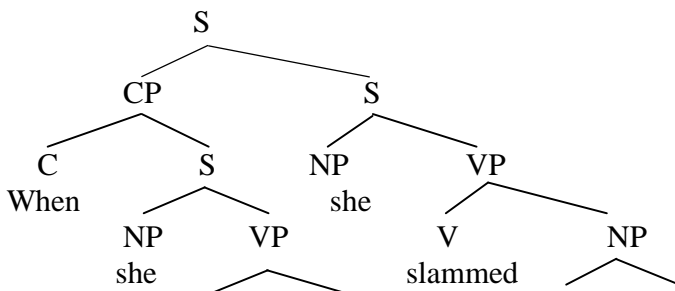
(7) John and Jane works.

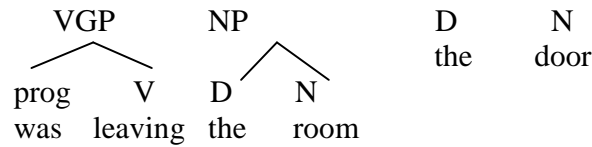
(Gelderen, 2010:114)



From the above diagram, we learn that the verb *work* is embedded. The connector *and*, which, to most structuralists, is considered as a conjunction, comprises a connector phrase CP with a clause *Jane work*. In the above diagram the clause is labelled as sentence S. The term *sentence* and *clause* have so far been used to represent the same basic structure i.e. an NP or the subject and a VP or the predicate.

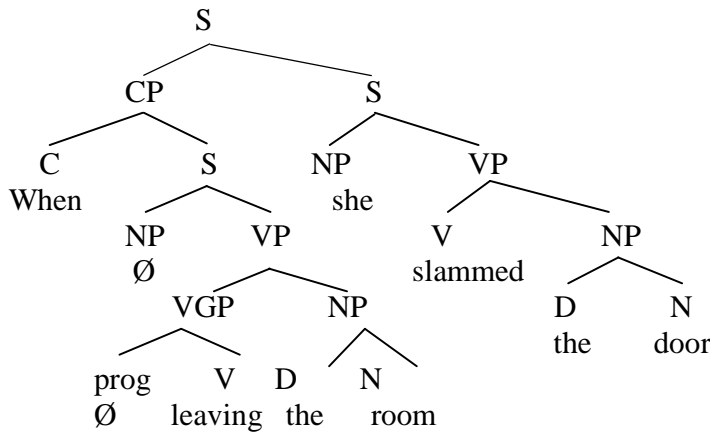
(8) When she was leaving the room, she slammed the door.



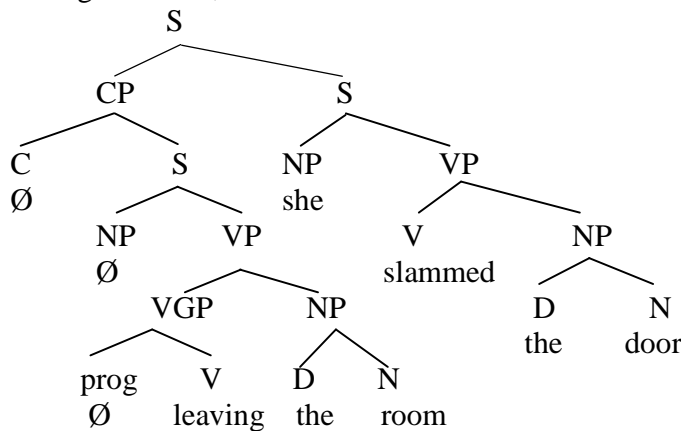


In the above sentence, the CP is at the beginning of the sentence followed by an S, which others call it an adverbial clause. The embedded parts are successively shown in the followings.

(9) When leaving the room, she slammed the door.



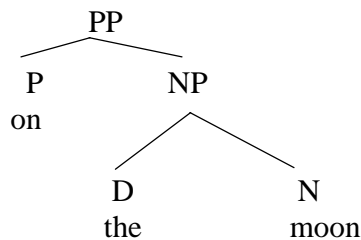
(10) Leaving the room, she slammed the door.



In (9) and (10), the embedded parts are clearly seen. The concept of CP is adopted from concept of prepositional phrase PP. A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and an NP. The PP *on the moon*, for example can be diagrammed in the following.

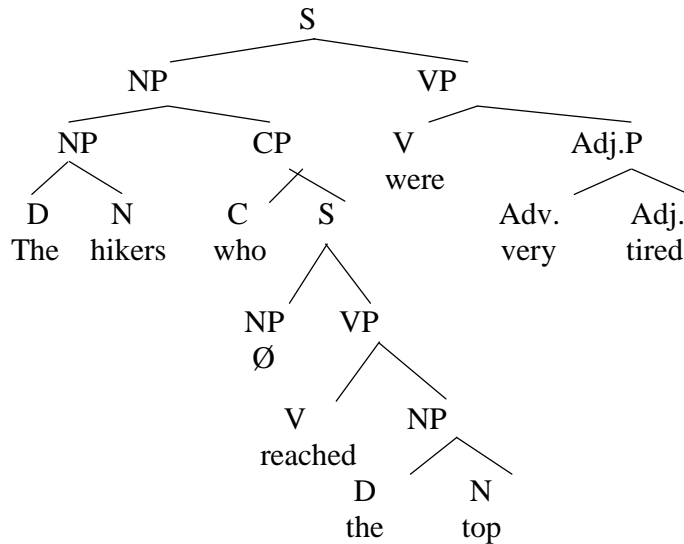
(11) on the moon.

(Gelderens, 2010:41)



It is a matter of fact that a preposition precedes an NP to form a prepositional phrase. The same case is supposed to happen in a CP. A connector precedes an S because whether embedded or not a connector joins two NPs and VPs.

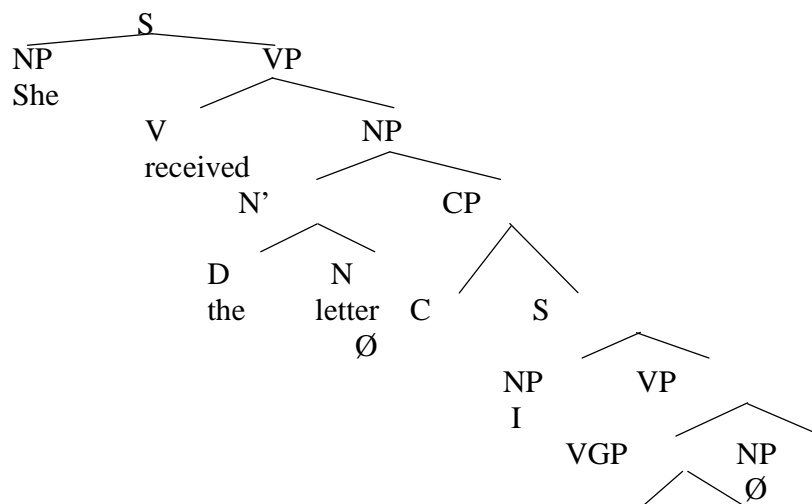
(12) The hikers, who reached the top were very tired.



In the above sentence, the connector *who* is separated from the function of a pronoun. Some grammarians call it a relative pronoun. It is true that certain NPs determine the kinds of connector but the relationship between the NPs and the connectors is limited to the form only not to the function.

Further analysis shows that a connector can be eliminated such as in (10). The following sentence shows another connector elimination.

(13) She received the letter I had sent.



pf	V
had	sent

From the above sentence, we know that the NP *I* shows its function and the connector is eliminated. Thus, it is important to separate a connective function from syntactic function.

C. Full Verb and Modal Auxiliary

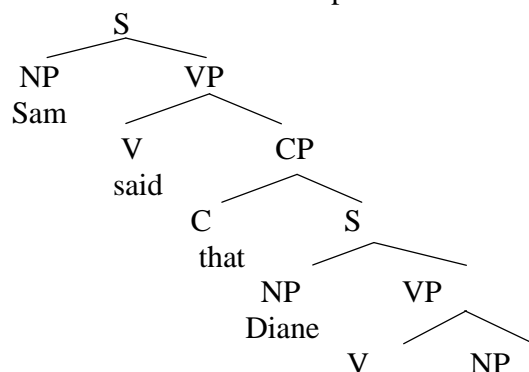
A full verb may be accompanied by an auxiliary and a primary verb. The former may take full predication while the latter cannot. Illustrations in (3), (8), (10), (12), and (13) show that they are attached to full verbs or to a subjective predicate as in (12). According to Quirk (1985:121) the criteria for an auxiliary verb may include the following characteristics such as the capability of a word to precede the negative word *not*, to appear in a contracted form with the negative enclitic, to be an operator, as an operator to show an emphatic positive, as an operator to come in reduced clause, to appear in pre adverb position, to precede a quantifier, to be semantically independent of subject, to precede a bare infinitive, to appear in finite form only, not to appear in the third person inflected form, and to show time reference.

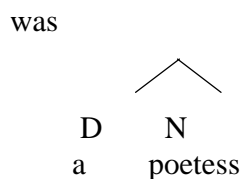
From the above mentioned characteristics Quirk (1985:137) summarizes modal auxiliaries into the following

1. Central Modals : *can, could, may, might, shall, should, will/'ll, would/'d, must*
2. Marginal Modal: *dare, need, ought to, used, to*
3. Modal Idioms : *had better, would rather/sooner, BE to, HAVE got to*
4. Semi Auxiliaries: *HAVE to, BE about to, BE able to, BE bound to, BE going to, BE obliged to, BE supposed to, BE willing to.*
5. Catenatives : *APPEAR to, HAPPEN to, SEEM to, GET + -ed participle, KEEP +-ing participle, etc*
6. Main verb + non-finite clause: *HOPE + to infinitive etc., BEGIN + -ing participle etc*

The inclusion of main verb such as *hope to, want to, intend to*, etc. in modal class presents a problem because these verbs are content verbs. Through syntactic analyses, Gelderen explains the case. Consider the following analyses.

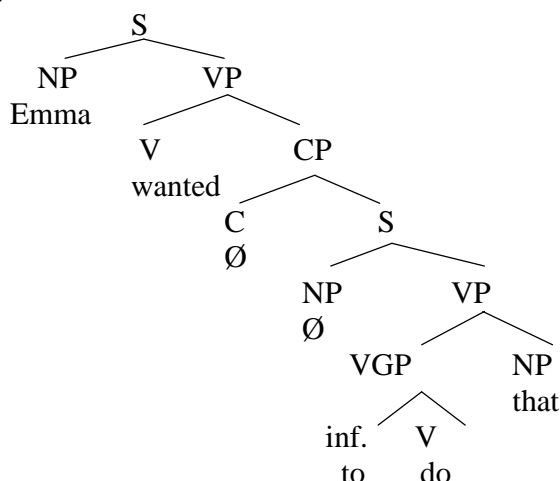
(14) Sam said that Diane was a poetess. (Gelderen, 2010:164)





(15) Emma wanted to do that.

(Gelderen, 2010:160)



The two sentences above show that the verbs in (14) has their subjects. Furthermore, the verbs in (15) has also subjects but because of the sameness subject there is deletion resulting in a serial verb *wanted to do*.

D. Conclusion.

From the brief discussion, we can conclude that the basic sentence structure is NP and VP. The term *connector* is used to indicate both coordination and subordination. A connector phrase CP is formed in the same way as a preposition phrase is form. The CP consists of a connector and an S having the structure NP and VP. The connector, NP, and the member of verb group are subject to deletion. A full verb determines an NP.

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