Ali Hassan Mohammed

العــــدد (10) آذار 2012

مجلة آداب الفراهيدي

Embedded and Coordinated Finite
and non-finite Clauses in   English
as a Foreign Language

Embedded and Coordinated Finite and non-finite Clauses in   English as a Foreign Language

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1. Abstract

The element of the verb which changes is termed " finite" and the other elements of the verb phrase are non-finite as in the following examples :

1. she is writing now .

2 . I am writing now .

So .*is* and *am* are finite ; whereas the next element ,'writing' is non-finite The Study aims at clarifying the sentence that includes more than one clause to make a clear distinction between the two concepts and their function . The hypothesis is to enable the learner to produce very long sentences (finite if he has the ability and energy) ,and he had never heard before by giving sentences that include more than one clause. In conclusion, this study discusses sentences that contain more than one lexical verb . These are of two types , embedded and coordinated . The main clause always has to be finite ,but an embedded clause can be finite or non-finite.

2. Introduction

A verb phrase which contains a finite element is termed finite verb phrase , and a verb phrase which does not contain a finite element is termed non-finite verb phrase   (Thakur,2010:73). This study gives examples of sentences that have contain more than one lexical verb , which means that they are composed of more than one clause . Sentences that are part of another; i.e. that have a function in that sentences , are often

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referred to as embedded clauses, where the embedded is seen as subordinate to the other . Embedded clauses function inside another clause as subject , direct or phrasal object , subject predicate, or adverbial . On the other hand, embedded clauses do not function as indirect objects or as objects of prepositional objects . They do not function as object predicates either . Coordinated clauses have no function in another clause ,they are on equal footing, i.e. this means that you could even make them into two independent clauses inside NP or Adj P, clauses function as modifiers (e.g. relative clauses) or complement (e.g. noun complement) . Sentences that are part of another sentences , are often referred to as embedded clauses , where the embedded clause is seen as subordinate to the other.

3.Finite Sentences and Clauses

The sentences that have one lexical verb and one or more auxiliaries are simple sentences .This research paper gives examples of sentences that include more than one lexical verb , which means that they are composed of more than one clause. A simple clause contains one lexical verb . Hence , if there are two lexical verbs , there are two clauses , in(1) below the lexical verbs are *noticed ,*and *like* and hence , there are two clauses: the main clause (*I should have noticed that Linda does n't like Hilda*) and the embedded one (*Linda doesn't like Hilda).* This can be indicated by means of brackets :

(1) [I should have **noticed**] that Linda doesn't **like** Hilda]].

In determining the clauses in a text , it will be helpful to first identify the lexical verbs and then to draw the brackets around the clauses .

The embedded clause in (1) is part of the main clause . We could split it up into two clauses , as in (2) , but that is awkward :

(2)   I should have noticed it .Linda doesn't like Hilda .

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Auxiliaries , such as *should* and *does* in (1) and (2) , are not relevant for determining the number of clauses or sentences ; only lexical verbs are .

In a coordinated sentence , there are also two lexical verbs (or more , if more clauses are coordinated or if one of them contains an embedded clause) but they are joined by a coordinator .Thus in (3), we have the main verbs *arrived* and drank and the coordinator *and*:

(3) [the water **arrived**] and [they **drank**] .

As we'll see , it is easier to divide (3) into two separate clauses than (1) and that is because coordinated clauses have a looser connection . Some linguists call the larger sentence in (1) the sentence or main clause and the smaller sentence the embedded sentence ,dependent or subordinate clause . In (1) both clauses have a VP containing a finite verb i.e. *should* and *does* (remember auxiliaries can be finite) , but embedded sentences can be non- finite as well. (Gelederen , 2010 :134) .

3.1 Functions of Clauses

Embedded clauses function inside another clause as subject , direct or phrasal object, subject predicate or adverbial .For instance , in (1) above , the embedded clause functions as direct object ; in (4) below, it is a subject ; in (5) ,a subject predicate ; in (6) a phrasal object; in (7) , an adverbial . The embedded clauses are indicated by means of brackets here :

(4) [That he answered] was nice .   (embedded
      subject)

(5) The problem is [that he reads junk].   (embedded
      subject predicate)

(6) He figured out [that it didn't work].   (embedded
      phrasal object)

(7) She paid money [because it was required]   (embedded
      adverbial)

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Embedded clauses do not function as direct objects or as objects of prepositional objects . They do not function as object predicates either . Inside an NP or AdjP , clauses function as modifiers (e.g. relative clauses) or complements (e.g. noun complements) .

(8) The student [from Iraq] has black hair .   (modification by pp) .

(9)   The student [who is from Iraq] has black hair .   (modification by RC).

Coordinated clauses have no function in another clause . They are on equal footing, most argue, with each other . In (3) ,this means that you could even make them into two independent clauses , as in (10) below , and although that sounds very 'choppy' ,it is better than (2) :

(10) The water arrived . They drank .   (Gelederen ,2010:134)

3.2 Immediate Constituents

Sentences are not merely strings of words in an acceptable order and 'making sense ' ; they are structured into successive components, consisting of groups of words ,contigous or discontiguous , and of single words . These groups and single words are called **constituents** , and when they are considered as part of the successive unraveling of a sentence , they are known as its **immediate constituents .** Immediate constituent analysis is basic to syntax and it formalizes part of the means whereby native speakers form and understand longer sentences (Robins1980 :175) .

Endocentric groups   are   either **subordinative** or **coordinative**   according to whether they are syntactically comparable to only one word or smaller component group within them, or to more than one .Thus *men and women* (noun conjunction noun) is coordinative , since it could be replaced by

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either *men* or *women* ,and *men* and *women* are coordinate ; but *clever boys*(adjective noun) is subordinate , since it could be replaced by *boys* ,but not in all syntactic relations by *clever* (ibid).
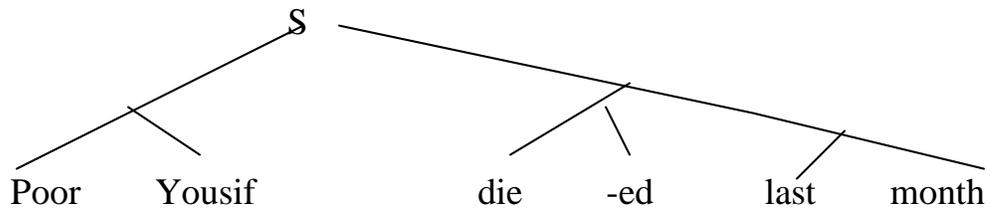
Bloomfield and the other proponents of IC analysis emphasized the fact that the grammatical structure of a sentence cannot be understood if that sentence is viewed as a mechanical togetherness of a number of words ,each of them having the same grammatical relationship with the sentence as a whole . A sentence is a hierarch organization of layered structures and the structure of each layer needs to be understood in terms of its immediate constituents . In other words , IC analysis was a reaction against " the notion , often unstated, that we need only examine words… as isolated units , longer utterances being simply mechanical combinations of the smaller units " (Hockett 1958:148). The structure of the following sentences illustrates this point .

Poor Yousif died last month .

It would be naïve to say that each of the five words in this sentence has the same relationship with the sentence as a whole and that the structure of this sentence can be grammatically represented as follows:

(Poor)+(Yousif)+(died)+(last)+(month) .

The IC analysis of this sentence will be in the form of the following diagram .

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3.3 The Structure of the Embedded Clause : The Complementizer Phrase (CP)

The *structure* of phrases and sentences means the way in which words are combined together to form phrases and sentences . The simplest way of forming a phrase is by **merging** (a technical term meaning ' combining') two words together. (Radford ,1999:61)

As mentioned, embedded sentences have complementizers that connect the embedded clause to another clause . These complementizers are sisters to S and a sentence with a complementizer is a Complementizer , Phrase , abbreviated as CP . The CP, as in (11) below, expresses that there is a sentence S that can be independent , occur on its own but , when it functions in another sentence , it is glued to that sentence by the C. The C determiners the nature of the phrase above the C and S , namely the CP :

(11)   CP

                C   S
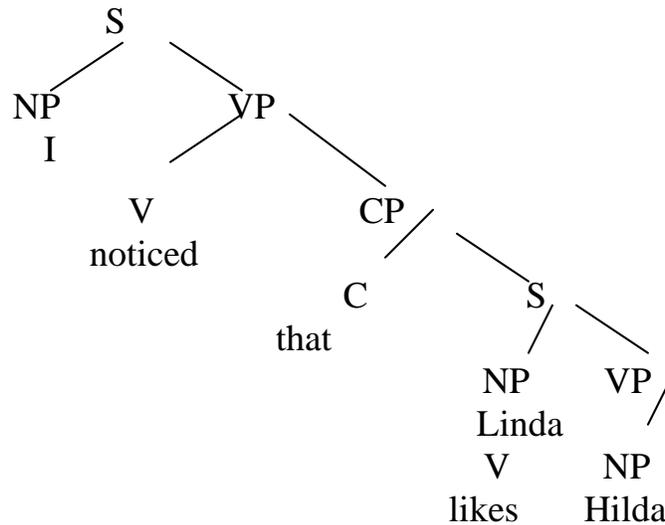   That   …
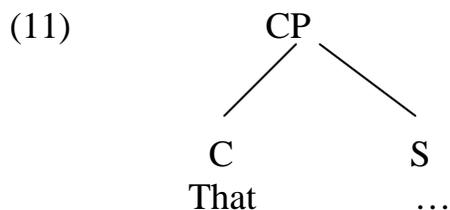
Unlike the S , CP cannot appear on its own , since a sentence as (12) is a fragment :

(12)   That he went to the supermarket .

Using CP , C ,and S , a sentence such as (1) , has a structure as in (13) below , simplifying (1) by taking the auxiliaries out :
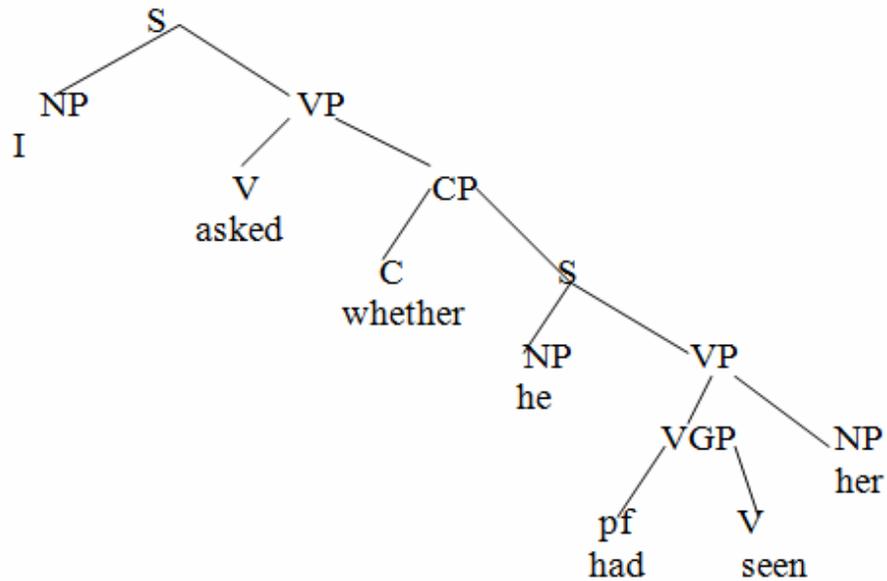
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(13)

```
                        S
                   /        \
                NP            VP
                I          /      \
                        V            CP
                     noticed      /    \
                                C          S
                              that      /    \
                                      NP      VP
                                    Linda    /  \
                                      V        NP
                                    likes    Hilda
```
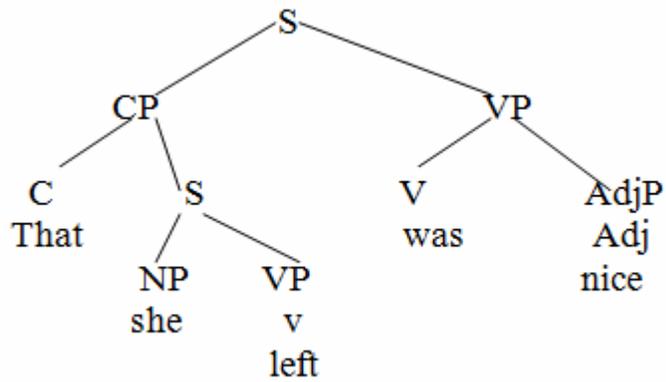
Using a CP makes it possible to include the complementizer in the sentence and link the embedded S to the main S. In (13) , the embedded CP is the sister to *noticed* , which means that it functions as the direct object to *noticed*.

There are also embedded clauses that express questions .In these ,the C position can be occupied by *if* or by *whether* as in (14) .The CP here ,as in (13) . functions as a direct object:
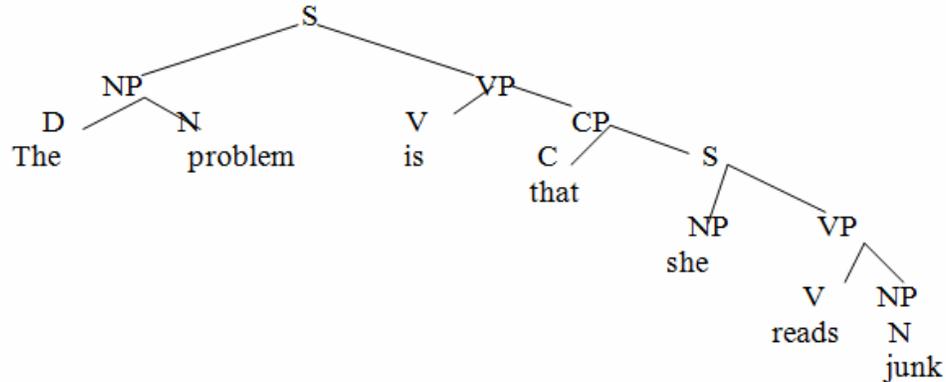
(14)

Trees for a CP as subject and a subject predicate clause are given in (15) and (16) respectively :
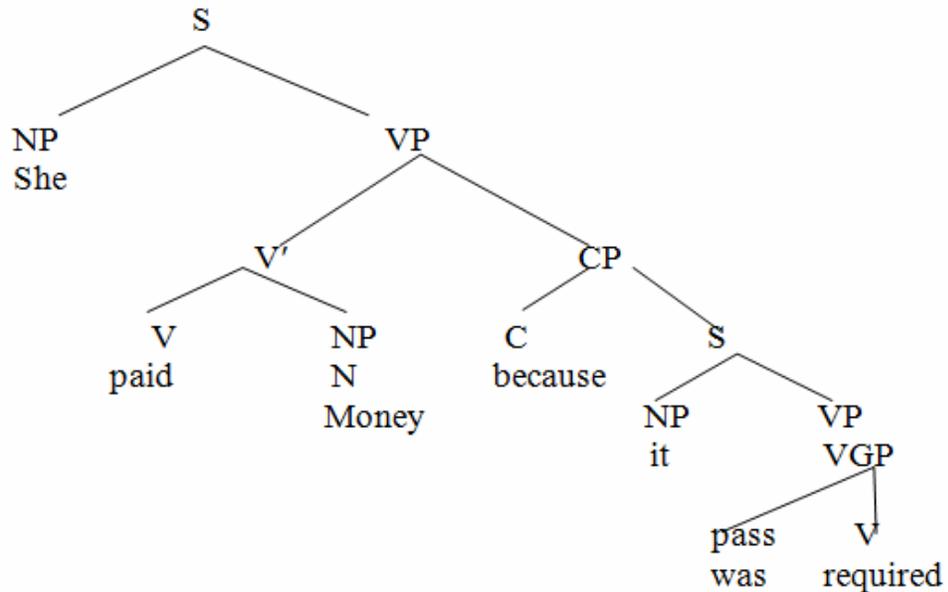
(15)

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(16)

```
                    S
          ┌─────────┴─────────┐
         NP                   VP
       ┌──┴──┐          ┌──────┴──────┐
       D     N          V            CP
      The  problem      is       ┌────┴────┐
                                 C          S
                               that    ┌────┴────┐
                                      NP         VP
                                      she    ┌───┴───┐
                                             V       NP
                                           reads     N
                                                    junk
```

Other examples of complementizers are because, *before, after, unless,* and *since* .These particular complementizers are often used to introduce adverbial clauses . An example of an embedded adverbial is given in (17) :

(17)

```
                       S
            ┌──────────┴──────────┐
           NP                     VP
           She          ┌─────────┴─────────┐
                       V'                   CP
                   ┌────┴────┐          ┌────┴────┐
                   V        NP          C          S
                  paid       N      because    ┌────┴────┐
                           Money               NP        VP
                                               it        VGP
                                                      ┌───┴───┐
                                                     pass     V
                                                     was   required
```

The position of clauses functioning as adverbials , like that of non-clausal adverbials ,is very flexible . For instance , in a

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sentence such as (17) , the *because-* clause can also precede *she paid money* ,as in(18):

(18) Because it was required ,she paid money .

The tree structure for this is as in a sentence with an S-adverbial namely, as in (19). However , other trees are possible:

(19)
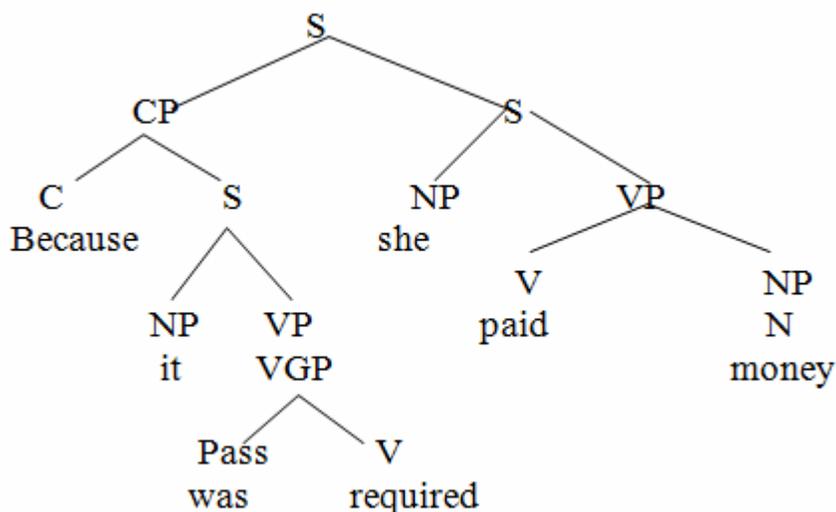
(Gelderen, 2010 : 135-138)

3.4 Coordinate Sentences : The Coordinate Phrase (CP)

Noun phrases and prepositional phrases frequently have a very complex structure and can contain several layers of embedding and phrases can be expanded by **coordination**. The grammatical roles of finite dependent clauses are many and varied. It is not always clear to what extent clauses should be regarded as independent or as part of other structure . A **finite** dependent clause contains a verb phrase which is marked for tense or modality   (Quirk , 1999 :193) As in the case of coordinate phrase discussed in (3.2) ,it is similar to represent coordinate sentences . As far as sentence (3) is concerned ; it is similar to (20) in that there is a connection between the two

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clauses .In (21), on the other hand , the two clauses have no causal relationship

(20)   [The water arrived] and [they drank].

(21)   [Mosul is a city in Iraq]and [the chair is made of plastic].

Sentences that are more closely connected have coordinator *and* that really means 'and then'. Then , the second clause is subordinate to the first and the structure of (20) would be similar to the adverbial clause in (17) above . In (21) , neither clause is subordinate to the other .This could be represented as follows :

(22)
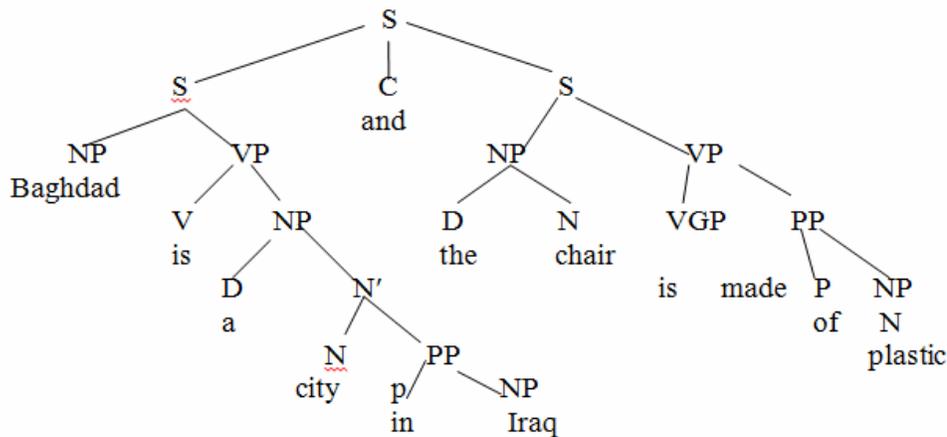
(Gelderen, 2010 :138)

4. Non- Finite Clauses

Non-finite clauses are regularly dependent .They are more compact and less explicit than finite clauses: they are not marked for tense and modality ,and they frequently lack an explicit subject and subordinate(Quirk , 1999 :198). Non-finite clauses contain only non-finite verbs and they can only function as parts of another sentence ; they are considered well-formed sentences on their own in formal writing but are seen as sentence fragments

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. Since they are complete sentences , they cannot be coordinated unless that coordinated structure is itself embedded . There are three kinds of non-finite clauses , namely those whose verb groups contain infinitives ,or present participles ,or past participles . In infinitives **,** there are two lexical verbs as in (1) below , *expected* and *go* . This means there are two clauses . The non-finite clause *him to go* is the object of *expected* . This non-finite clause can of course be rephrased by means of a finite clause ,as in (2) :

(1)   [She expected [him **to go**]].

(2)   [She expected [that he would go]].

The infinitive implies something uncertain or something that will happen in the future perhaps .The corresponding main clause therefore has a modal *would* , expressing a similar uncertainty . There are two types of infinitives one with *to* as in (1), and a bare one ,without *to* as in (3) .

The bare infinitive lacks the uncertainty :

(3)   She   made   [him   leave]   .
The bare infinitive in (3) occurs only as the object after verbs such as *make ,see, hear ,*and *feel* . The to- infinitive is much more frequent . It occurs as object to many verbs ,as subject , subject predicate ,and adverbial . There are two other kinds of non-finite Verb groups , usually referred to as participles . They involve the present participle ending in *-ing* ,as in (4) below, and the past participle ending in –ed or –en , as in (5) :

(4)   [**walking** down the street] , she was bothered by the traffic jam .

(5) [**Kidnapped** last night] , she is in Central Area right now . The word *kidnapped* is a regular past participle because it ends in –ed . However , past participle , like simple past tenses , can have irregular endings . The participle clause in (4) can have while as a complementizer . Another characteristics of non- finites is that the subject is not

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nominative . Thus , (6) and (7) are grammatical with the subject of the infinitive as *him* , i.e. accusative . Sentences (8) with a nominative *he* as subject of the non-finite is not :

(6)   She wants [him to go].
(7)   She heard [him playing a song].
  (8)   She wants he to go .

(ibid)

4.1 The functions of Non-Finites

The functions of non-finite clauses are similar to those of finite ones . They function as sentence level as subject in (9) , direct object in (10) , adverbial in (11) ,and subject predicate in (12):

(9) [Eating banana] is a pleasant thing .
(10) I love [eating banana].
(11) They went there [to eat fry fish and potatoes].
(12) The problem is [to decide on what to eat].

The present participle clause ,as in (9) and (10),and the *to*-infinitive clause, as in (11) and (12) ,are the most versatile in function .
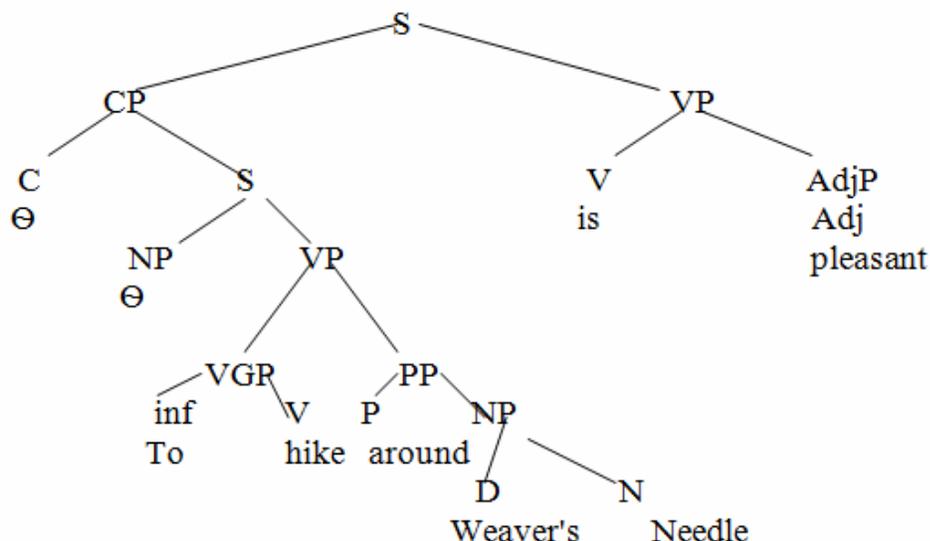
4.2 The Structure : CP

An   empty complementizer can be represented by C position to be filled by *for* in a number of cases, e.g. in (13) . Using the C position , even if it is empty , because it shows that the non-finite clause is embedded :

(13)   I want [**for** you to do your homework] .

Non –finite clauses need not include a subject . The subject may be understood ,as in (14). Since the subject is understood. So , a subject position will be added with an empty subject , as in (15) , as well as an empty C since there is no complementizer :

(14) To hike around Weaver's needle is pleasant .

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(15)

The subject and complementizer could be added in (15) and the reason behind that it is pleasant for **someone** to walk around Weaver's Needle , the tree expresses that there is a subject even if this subject is left out. (Geldern,2010: 135-140)

4.3 Coordinating non-finites

Non-finite clauses can be coordinated as in (16) . The coordinated non-finite clauses *gossiping about Hilda* and *chewing gum* function as subject to the verb *is*. (Note that speakers differ as to whether the verb is *is* or *are*) :

(16) [[Gossiping about Hilda] and [chewing gum]] is hard to do at the same time.

(17) She could not think of [[Emma losing a single pleasure] or [suffering an hour's ennui]].

(18)   But Emma, in her own mind ,determined that he did not know what he was talking about, and that he showed a very amiable inclination [[to settle early in life],and [to marry]]. (adapted from Jane Austen's *Emma*) .

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(Gelederen,2010:155)

5. Contrastive study of Finite and Non-finite verbs

From another point of view , verbs can be divided into two subclasses : finite and non-finite . The difference between these two subclasses of verbs can be described as follows :

(a) Finite verbs are marked for tense but non-finite verbs are not . In accordance with this criterion , we can say that the verb in the main clause of each of the following sentences is a finite verb but the verbs in the subordinate clauses , i.e., the verbs italicized in these sentences, are all non-finite verbs .

She helps me *to learn* English every day .

She helped me *to learn* English yesterday .

He makes me *do* that every day.

He made me *do* that yesterday .

(b) Finite verbs show number and person concord with the subject but non-finite verbs show no such concord with the subject .

She *goes* home every day .

I want *her to* go home every day .

The verb italicized in the first example is a finite verb because it shows number and person concord with the subject but the verb italicized in the second sentence is a non-finite verb because it shows no such concord .

If we apply these two criteria together , we can say that *is, am, ,are, was* and *were* are the finite forms of the verb *be,* and *to be, been* and *being* are non-finite forms . It may be pointed out here that the first of these two criteria for making a distinction between finite and non-finite verbs is more important than the second in the sense that all finite verbs in English satisfy this criterion . A large number of finite verbs satisfy the second criterion as well , but this is by no means an obligatory criterion . Modal auxiliaries , for example , do not show number and person

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concord with the subject but they are indisputably assigned to the class of finite verbs (Thakur, 2002 :73-74) .

6. Conclusions

The terms clause and sentence are used interchangeably. Grammar has existed for thousands of years and hence there are many terms that have come to be used . In conclusion , a main clause always has to be finite but that an embedded clause can be finite or non-finite .Sentences that contain more than one lexical verb are of two kinds ,embedded and coordinated .Embedded clauses are part of another clause and function as subject, direct object , or adverbial in that clause . Coordinate sentences are like independent sentences but are combined with a coordinator ,such as *and.* Two possible cases of structure ,one when the two clauses are dependent on each other and another when that's not the case . On the other hand, the function and structure of non-finite clauses is quite similar to that of finite clauses, they differ from it only in that the coplementizer often does not appear and the subject can be absent .

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