CHAPTER 17

Clauses within clauses

As mentioned in Chapter 2 when we dealt with main and subordinate, a clause is similar to what you probably think of as a sentence. Clauses are usually thought of as containing two basic constituents: a subject (a noun phrase) and a predicate (a verb phrase plus what other things the particular verb type requires).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subject</th>
<th>predicate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The old man with funny shoes</td>
<td>slept quietly in the corner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rat</td>
<td>ate the grain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>have been working nights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The children</td>
<td>cried.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subjects occur in the first column; the full predicates occur in the second. Note that only the italicized parts of the predicate are required by the verb.

In this chapter, we are going to deal with two types of clauses embedded within larger clauses, that is, with ‘sentences’ within ‘sentences’. The better-known of the two types is the relative clause, marked by its characteristic relative pronoun. Examine this sentence:

The man who won the race is my grandfather.

The main sentence is The man is my grandfather but within this sentence is the relative clause who won the race, which itself contains both a subject who and a predicate won the race. It is fairly obvious why relative clauses are considered clauses.

The other type of embedded clause is marked by what is called a complementizer. These clauses with their complementizers are discussed when we get to the section on complementizer types.
Chapter 14: Relative clauses

Relative clauses

**Relative pronouns**

Relative pronouns are those pronouns that are used in relative clauses. The first three relative clauses contain relative pronouns; the last two contain relative adverbs.

The man *who* won the race…
The table *that* Grandfather built…
The book *which* Herman just finished writing…

The city *where* the incident happened…
A time *when* there was peace on earth…

There is a growing tendency, partially of prescriptive origins, for the pronoun *that* to be the only pronoun in restrictive relative clauses.

**Relative clause types**

The distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses rests on the communicative function of the relative clause. If the relative clause serves to (help) identify the head noun, it is restrictive. This functional difference is the basis for the following illustration.

First, ask three or four different students what country they are from (or, how old they are). Then ask them if they know where you are from. In my case, at least some of them know that I am from Canada. Then, put the following sentences on the board:

Point to the student *who is from Ethiopia.*
Point to the student *who is from Malaysia.*
Point to the student *who is from Mexico.*
Point to the teacher, *who is from Canada.*

It is quickly apparent that, to obey the first three commands, the information in the relative clause is needed, but not for the fourth command; for the first three commands, the relative clause helps answer the question *Which one?* but not for the fourth. Notice that if the relative
clauses in the first three examples are erased, we do not know which student is being referred
to; if the relative clause in the last example is erased, we can still point to the teacher.

Further examples of a parallel kind can be made up about the classroom, the students,
and the immediate environment. The only crucial requirement is that the examples be real in
the same way that the examples given above are real.

This exercise is included not just as an example of the relative clause but also as an
example of how something quite difficult to explain, can, nonetheless, be illustrated simply
and clearly.

In writing, the difference between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses is also
indicated by the punctuation. Restrictive relative clauses are not punctuated, but non-restric-
tive relative clauses are set off from the rest of the sentence by commas. This absence or pres-
ence of commas correlates with a real meaning difference:

1. The students who work hard do well on the tests. (restrictive)
2. The students, who work hard, do well on the tests. (non-restrictive)

In the first sentence, *The students who work hard...* tells which students are being talked
about. In the second sentence, *The students...* tells which students are being talked about.

A similar meaning difference is indicated by the punctuation difference in the pair of
sentences:

3. The tourists *who come from Brazil* speak Portuguese. (restrictive)
4. The tourists, *who come from Brazil*, speak Portuguese. (non-restrictive)

In the first sentence, *The tourists who come from Brazil...* tells which tourists are being talked
about. In the second sentence, *The tourists...* tells which tourists are being talked about. In
this sentence, the relative clause does not serve to tell which tourists; rather it only adds some
parenthetical information about the language of all the tourists.

The relative pronoun *that* only occurs in restrictive relative clauses.
The old man *who* used to work at the computer company…
The old man *that* used to work at the computer company…

The fact that *that* can substitute for *who* is the example shows that the relative clause is restrictive.

Note: There is a prescriptive rule that *that* cannot be used to refer to humans. Like many prescriptive rules, it is not true. However, like many prescriptive rules, it should be followed in formal writing.

The inability of *that* to substitute for a relative pronoun shows that the relative clause is non-restrictive and thus requires commas:

Bill's mother, who used to work at the computer company…
(but not) Bill's mother, *that used to work at the computer company…

**Exercise 14.1: Relative Clauses**

First underline the relative clause and then add any needed commas. If there is a problem, be prepared to discuss it.

1. My brother Cedric's first child who will be sixteen years old this month is in the tenth grade.
2. Bill's mother who has only been painting for about a year and a half now won a second place ribbon at the fair for one of her water colors.
3. The police still do not know the name of the woman who robbed the Safeway store three weeks ago.
4. Her father did not seem to like any of the young men who dated his only daughter.
5. The men who were drafted were unhappy, but the men who were not were happy.

**Exercise 14.2: Relative Clauses**

First underline the relative clause and then add any needed commas. If there is a problem, be prepared to discuss it.
1. The kind of elephant which is normally found in Africa is hard to train; in contrast, the kind of elephant which is normally found in Asia is much easier to train.
2. The message which the President released to the press yesterday was not very encouraging.
3. The Carol who used to teach reading and composition got married; the other Carol did not.
4. Bill's wife who works at Penny's will get her B.A. in June.
5. Senator Jason Samuels who is running for re-election is quite active in foreign affairs; Senator Malvin Jackson who is not running for re-election has not been active in anything lately.
6. The Chinese who are industrious do well in business.

**EXERCISE 14.3: RELATIVE CLAUSES**

First underline the relative clause and then add any needed commas. If there is a problem, be prepared to discuss it.

1. My sister Sally's youngest daughter who was born in mid winter seems to hate the summer months.
2. The nephew of Jane's who has been living across the street will be entering university in the fall. Her other nephew is still in high school.
3. The IRS is looking for the man who filed false income tax returns under seven different names.
4. His mother never seemed to like any of the young women who dated her only son.
5. Students who work hard get better grades than students who don't.

**EXERCISE 14.4: RELATIVE CLAUSES**

First underline the relative clause and then add any needed commas. If there is a problem, be prepared to discuss it.

1. The kind of teacher who prepares for each class usually teaches well; the kind of teacher who fakes with any frequency usually does not.
2. The food which I cooked for dinner yesterday made me extremely sick,
3. The woman who used to teach the Arabic class left for a job at Yale; unfortunately the
man who took her place is not yet an experienced teacher.

4. Bill’s older brother who is extremely nice cannot, however, seem to find a job.

5. The Mr. Jackson who used to play for the Yankees should not be mistaken for the Mr. Jackson who used to play for the Raiders.

6. The older people who take care of themselves seem to live happier lives.

“Reduced counterparts” to relative clauses

Relative clauses often have as “reduced counterparts” both appositives and adjectival participial phrases. Like their full clause counterparts, the appositives may be either restrictive or non-restrictive.

An appositive:

Linguistics, which is a difficult subject, can be enjoyable.

= Linguistics, a difficult subject, can be enjoyable.

Notice that the punctuation did not change. The full clause version is non-restrictive and the corresponding appositive is non-restrictive—with exactly the same punctuation.

In contrast to the appositives and unlike their full clause counterparts, adjectival participial phrases may only be restrictive.

An adjectival participial phrase:

Students who are studying English grammar work hard.

= Students studying English grammar work hard.

Notice that the punctuation did not change. The full clause version is restrictive, so that corresponding participial is restrictive.¹²

Exercise 14.5: Appositives and Participial Phrases.

Reduce the relative clauses in the following sentences to adjective phrases, prepositional phrases, or appositive phrases.
1. Historical linguistics, which is a difficult subject, can be fascinating.
2. The students who are taking Mary Haas' class this semester are enjoying it.
3. The one book of hers which is used in universities around the world is her book on historical linguistics.
4. One NSF report which is on reserve in the library is required reading for everyone in the class.
5. Marc Okrand, who was one of the top graduate students in Dr. Haas' courses a number of years ago, has since done interesting work with ASL, the language of the deaf.
6. The students that are in her classes consider it a privilege to study with her.
7. She has written several articles which are on various aspects of Western intellectual history.
8. The insights which are presented in these writings are still as important today as they were when they were originally written.

**Complementizers**

In English, in addition to relative clauses, there are three basic ways to insert (or embed) one clause inside another, each of which is marked by its own distinct complementizer. Let us examine each of the complementizer types in turn.¹

**The that + clause pattern.**² In the example, the main clause is [Subject] surprised no one, where the subject is the clause That he won the prize.

1. Non-restrictive relative clauses do not appear to have a “reduced” counterpart. What at first might appear to be a “reduced” counterpart turns out upon closer examination to be an adverbial participial phrase.

   Bill, who was working hard all summer, got into good condition.

   = ?Bill, working hard all summer, got into good condition.

   = ?Working hard all summer, Bill got into good condition.

   Note that the relationship between these three sentences—if there is a relationship at all—suggests that the participial phrase is adverbal, not adjectival.

2. A complementizer is nothing more than the marker of an embedded clause.

1. This discussion of complementizers has been simplified. Complementizers are one of the more complex and less understood areas of English grammar.

2. Alternatively, it is possible to argue that this is simply a different pattern.
That he won the prize surprised no one.

That he won a prize... is a clause; it has both a subject he and a predicate won the prize. In fact, were it not for the complementizer That preceding it, he won a prize could stand alone as an independent sentence. The complementizer That helps the listener or reader to process such sentences; if you want to test this, cover up That in this example and then read the sentence.

The (POSS) + -ing pattern. In the example, the main clause is again [Subject] surprised no one, but this time the subject is His having won the prize.

His having won the prize surprised no one.

His having won the prize is considered a clause, for the same reasons that That he won a prize... is considered a clause; it has both a subject and a predicate. The subject, marked by the possessive case, is the possessive pronoun His and the predicate, marked by the -ing form of the verb, is the phrase having won the prize.

If the subject of the main clause and the subject of the embedded clause are the same, it is possible for the subject to be omitted. So, if Evert and his both refer to Evert, the second alternative is not just possible, but preferred.

Evert dreaded his having to do the work.

Evert dreaded having to do the work.

The subject of the (POSS)-ing complementizers is not always in the possessive cases.

Art hates anybody('s) knowing more gossip than he does.

Art hates anybody knowing more gossip than he does.

In the example, anybody sounds at least as good without the -'s as it does with it.

The (for)...to... pattern. In the example, the main clause is again [Subject] surprised no one, but this time the subject is For him to win the prize.
For him to win the prize surprised no one.

For him to win the prize is also considered a clause. The subject, marked by the for, is the object pronoun him and the predicate, marked by the to before the verb, is the phrase to win the prize.

Again, if the subject of the main clause and the subject of the embedded clause are the same, it is possible for the subject to be omitted. So if Evert and him both refer to Evert, the second alternative is the preferred one.

Evert arranged for him to win the contest.
cf. Evert arranged to win the contest.

In all three patterns, the elements that serve to mark the embedded clauses are known as complementizers: the that-complementizer, the (POSS)-ing complementizer, and the (for)...to... complementizer.

The for part of the (for)...to... complementizer is often omitted. It occurs most frequently with adjectives that indicate degrees of probability; subject adjectives are often followed by a clause.

It is unlikely for President Reagan to comment on the story.
It is possible for her to have stolen the money.
It is necessary for you to fill out the paper if you want the job.
It is not unexpected for him to do something stupid.

In the case of other verbs with (for)...to... complementizers, it is more typical for the subject not to be marked by for than it is for it to be marked.

Art hates (for) anybody to know more gossip than he does.
Art hates anybody to know more gossip than he does.

The sentence sounds just as good without the for as with it.
The choice of complementizers. Which complementizer occurs and which does not may seem whimsical, but at least to some degree it depends on the verb of the main clause. The verb *advise*, for example, can be followed by all three types:

- My cardiologist advised *that I exercise.*
- My cardiologist advised *(my) exercising.*
- My cardiologist advised *me to exercise.*

The existence of these various alternative choices brings up an obvious question: Do they all mean the same thing? It is clear, of course, that they mean essentially the same thing, but it is far from clear that they mean exactly the same thing. For those speakers who actually use more than one of the possible choices, do they use one in one context and the others in other contexts? Certain alternatives unquestionably do correlate with differences in meaning, but in other cases it is not clear that this is so.

Other verbs cannot occur with all three complementizer types. Consider the verb *avoid:*

- Marilyn avoided *that she tell me the truth.*
- Marilyn avoided *to tell me the truth.*
- Marilyn avoided *telling me the truth.*

As the asterisk indicates, the first two sentences are strange. Only the third sentence sounds right. In fact, notice that any verb following *avoid* will have the *-ing* form of the verb. To check this, try putting various verbs are avoid in this partial sentence.

Shirley avoided ____________________________________

For contrast, try putting various verbs after *wants* in this partial sentence.

Shirley wants  ____________________________________

Notice that *to* occurs in front of any verb that follows *wants.* In this sense, the choice of complementizer type is controlled by the main verb. In grammatical terms, the verb *avoid* gov-
erns the choice of complementizer, that is, *avoid* determines which complementizer will be used.

Some sample sentences:

I can't *afford* to buy a new car.
Nations often *agree* to reduce armaments.
A good businessman *aims* to please his customers.
Mrs. Green does not *allow* smoking in her house.
Walter's mother will not *allow* him to attend the game.
I *appreciate* working in a friendly department.
John *appreciated* Mary's helping him.
John *appreciated* Mary helping him.
Armando *asked* me to read an article he had just written.
The little boy *asked* to be excused from the table.
The whole class had to *ask* how to do the assignment.
Next week, Jane will *attempt* running her first marathon.
Next week, Jane will *attempt* to run her first marathon.

Every day, Art *begins* working in the fields before dawn.
Every day, Art *begins* to work in the fields before dawn.

Despite three witnesses, the small boy *denies* doing it.
Ellen *detested* working as a sales clerk.

The mob *had* Benny kill the informer.
Frank, according to Frank, *happens* to know everything.
It is unnecessary to *help* Geri cause trouble.
It is unnecessary to *help* Geri to cause trouble.
Mark *hopes* to marry Susan in the spring.

Allen just *imagined* hearing those voices.
I can't *imagine* Allen's drinking too much.
Didn't you *imagine* him to be a little less eccentric?
I can *imagine* how to go about fixing it, but I don't have the parts.
In the long run, Jake succeeded because he kept trying.
Ela never lets anything bother her.
The mayor refused to let the police help with the situation.
Let’s see if it works.

It's not that I don't like singing; I just don't like his singing.
Sammy really didn't like to do anything that involved work.
Marc loves telling bad jokes.
Unfortunately, I don't love to listen to Marc tell them.
Benny's wife loves his cooking dinner.
Benny's wife loves him to cook dinner.

You can't make me do anything!
A good movie makes him cry.
Do you mind explaining this example to me again?
Suzie didn't mind being the center of attention.
Her secretary reminded her to go to the meeting, but she forgot.

Penny can't stand working, let alone working hard.
Penny can't stand to work, let alone to work hard.
Others can't stand Penny's complaining about work.

You should start writing as soon as possible.
You should start your writing as soon as possible.
You should start to write as soon as possible.

The author never even tried to answer his critics.
The author never even tried answering his critics.
EXERCISES: COMPLEMENTIZER TYPES

EXERCISE 14.6: THE (POSS)-ing PATTERN.

By using the list of sentences or by making up your own examples, find four verbs that allow the following verb to have the (POSS)-ing pattern.

1. _____________________ 2. _____________________
3. _____________________ 4. _____________________

EXERCISE 14.7: THE (FOR)...TO... PATTERN.

By using the list of sentences or by making up your own examples, find four verbs that allow the following verb to have the (for)...to... pattern.

1. _____________________ 2. _____________________
3. _____________________ 4. _____________________

EXERCISE 14.8: THE ALTERNATE PATTERNS.

By using the list of sentences or by making up your own examples, find four verbs that allow the following verb to have the (POSS)-ing or the (for)...to... pattern.

1. _____________________ 2. _____________________
3. _____________________ 4. _____________________

EXERCISE 14.9: THE (FOR)-to PATTERN.

Another pattern is for the main verb to take the (for)...to... pattern, but without the to.

Mr. Simmons made his son play hockey.
Chapter 14: Psychological verbs

By using the list of sentences or by making up your own examples, find other verbs that show this pattern.

1. _____________________ 2. ______________________
3. _____________________ 4. ______________________

Psychological verbs

As you may already have noticed from other examples elsewhere, verbs that express an opinion or report a mental judgement can often be followed by *the subject + to be + the judgement*, with the *to be* optionally omitted.

His friends considered *him to be flaky.*
His friends considered *him flaky.*

His wife declared *him to be dead.*
His wife declared *him dead.*

Verb + *-ing* as nouns, verbs, and adjectives

The verb + *-ing* form can be used a noun, as part of a verb, or as an adjective. There are two ways in which the verb + *-ing* form is used as a noun (that is, as a gerund): when it is the subject of a sentence and when it occurs as an object after another verb:

*Eating* is one of my favorite activities. (as a noun)
You need to *avoid working* so hard. (as a noun)

The old scholar *was reading* hieroglyphics. (as part of the verb)
The *dripping* faucet disturbed her sleep. (as an adjective)
Exercise 14.10: Verb + -ing patterns.

Read this passage from a health newsletter. Underline the verb + -ing forms and decide which are functioning as nouns (gerunds), which are a part of the verb, and which are adjectives.

Swimming is great exercise. It's healthy, fun and relaxing. Because swimming is a “low-impact” sport, most people can enjoy participating in this activity without fear of injury to bones or muscles. Jogging, a “high-impact” activity, can be harmful. I know this from personal experience. Last year while I was jogging I injured my right knee. After a painful month of recovery, I stopped my daily running and switched to water sports. Although I haven't done either yet, I'm now considering joining a swimming club and competing in races.

List the nouns you underlined in the health newsletter passage. Some are nouns because they are subjects; next to these, write ‘subject’. Some of the nouns are objects because they follow certain verbs; next to these, write ‘because of the verb ____’.

swimming subject
swimming
participating
because of the verb enjoy

...
Terms

To check yourself, see if you can briefly describe each of the following terms and illustrate it in a phrase or sentence (underlining the relevant part).

relative clauses: (=adjective clauses)
  restrictive (=defining)
  non-restrictive (=non-defining)

relative pronouns

complementizer

complementizer types:

  The *that* + clause pattern
  *That he won the prize*  surprised no one.

  The *(POSS) + -ing* pattern
  *His having won the prize*  surprised no one.

  The *(for)...to...* pattern
  *For him to win the prize*  surprised no one.

appositive

adjectival participial phrase

govern
  e.g., the verb *avoid*  governs the choice of complementizer
Answers to Exercise 14.1:

1. My brother Cedric's first child, who will be sixteen years old this month, is in the tenth grade.
2. Bill's mother, who has only been painting for about a year and a half now, won a second place ribbon at the fair for one of her water colors.
3. The police still do not know the name of the woman who robbed the Safeway store three weeks ago.
4. Her father did not seem to like any of the young men who dated his only daughter.
5. The men who were drafted were unhappy, but the men who were not were happy.

Answers to Exercise 14.2:

1. The kind of elephant which is normally found in Africa is hard to train; in contrast, the kind of elephant which is normally found in Asia is much easier to train.
2. The message which the President released to the press yesterday was not very encouraging.
3. The Carol who used to teach reading and composition got married; the other Carol did not.
4. Bill's wife, who works at Penny's, will get her B.A. in June.
5. Senator Jason Samuels, who is running for re-election, is quite active in foreign affairs; Senator Malvin Jackson, who is not running for re-election, has not been active in anything lately.
6. The Chinese who are industrious do well in business. Unless, of course, you are claiming that all Chinese do well in business.

Answers to Exercise 14.3:

1. My sister Sally's youngest daughter, who was born in mid winter, seems to hate the summer months.
2. The nephew of Jane's who has been living across the street will be entering university in the fall. Her other nephew is still in high school.
3. The IRS is looking for the man who filed false income tax returns under seven different names.
4. His mother never seemed to like any of the young women who dated her only son.
5. Students **who work hard** get better grades than students who don't.

Answers to Exercise 14.4:

1. The kind of teacher **who prepares for each class** usually teaches well; the kind of teacher **who fakes with any frequency** usually does not.
2. The food **which I cooked for dinner yesterday** made me extremely sick.
3. The woman **who used to teach the Arabic class** left for a job at Male; unfortunately the man **who took her place** is not yet an experienced teacher.
4. Bill's older brother, **who is extremely nice**, cannot, however, seem to find a job.
5. The Mr. Jackson **who used to play for the Yankees** should not be mistaken for the Mr. Jackson **who used to play for the Raiders**.
6. The older people **who take care of themselves** seem to live happier lives.

Answers to Exercise 14.5:

1. Historical linguistics, a difficult subject, can be fascinating.
2. The students taking Mary Haas' class this semester are enjoying it.
3. The one book of hers used in universities around the world is her book on historical linguistics.
4. One NSF report on reserve in the library is required reading for everyone in the class.
5. Marc Okrand, one of the top graduate students in Dr. Haas' courses a number of years ago, has since done interesting work with ASL, the language of the deaf.
6. The students in her classes consider it a privilege to study with her.
7. She has written several articles which on various aspects of Western intellectual history.
8. The insights presented in these writings are still as important today as they were when they were originally written.

Answers to Exercise 14.6:

1. **appreciated** Mary's helping him
2. **denies** doing it
3. **mind** explaining the answer
4. **avoided** telling the truth
Answers to Exercise 14.7:

1. **agree** to reduce arms
2. **aims** to please
3. **allow** him to attend the game
4. **asked** me to read a story

Answers to Exercise 14.8:

1. **like** his singing, **like** to sing
2. **stand** working; **stand** to work
3. **start** working; **start** to work
4. **attempt** running, **attempt** to run

Answers to Exercise 14.9:

1. **help** Geri cause trouble
2. **let** anything bother her
3. can’t **make** me do anything!
4. **had** Benny kill the informer

Answers to Exercise 14.10:

1. first part:

   - swimming - noun; relaxing - adjective; swimming - noun; participating - noun; jogging - noun; was jogging - part of the verb was jogging); running - noun; joining - noun; competing - noun.

   second part:

   - swimming subject
   - swimming subject
   - participating because of the verb enjoy
   - jogging subject
   - running because of the verb stopped
   - joining because of the verb considering
   - competing because of the verb considering