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((Nominal Clause Structure))

Nominal Clause Structure

Nominal clauses are subordinate clauses functioning as nouns or noun phrases. That is, they take the position of **Subject, Object, Complement,** etc. in a clause. They are introduced by:

1. Relative pronoun *that*
2. Relative adverbs: *how, why, when, where*
3. Subordinating conjunctions: *if, whether*

There are four main kinds of noun clauses in English:

- **That**-clause: I know **that you will soon leave me.**
- **Wh**-clause (relative): **When he does his homework** , is his problem.
- **Infinitive** clause: Our plan is **to catch the early train.**
- **{-Ing}** clause: You are in danger of **making a bad mistake**

1. THAT- CLAUSES

That-clauses are noun clauses; they can be:

- a) **Subject:** **That all of them are happy** is visible.
- b) **Object:** It is strange **that they did not come at all.**
That can be a conjunction which introduces that-clauses or a relative pronoun which introduces a defining relative clause (i.e. that = who or which)

•**That**- clauses usually follow:

- a) certain adjectives: afraid that, sorry that, angry that, surprised that, happy that, pleased that, certain that, clear that, likely that, obvious that, true that: e.g. I am *happy* **that you have arrived safely.**

***It is important that, it is necessary that, it is essential that**

can be followed by the basic form of the verb or

should as in:

c) It's *essential* **that the parcel (should) arrive safely**

2. Certain abstract nouns:

fact, belief, news (as modifiers in a Noun Phrase):e.g.

The *News* **that he was resigning from his job** shocked us.

We can omit **that** from all positions, except when the **that** goes at the beginning of the sentence or when the **that-** clause is after an abstract noun:e.g.

That he murdered him does not prove anything.

I know **(that) he is a good boy.**

It is a pity **(that) he leaves us**

2. WH- CLAUSE/RELATIVE CLAUSE

These Clauses are introduced by a wh- pronoun or wh- determiner which combines the functions of the relative pronoun with that of the determiner and /or head of the whole noun phrase. For example, the proverb:

Whoever laughs last, laughs longest, can be put in the form.

Those who laugh last, laugh longest.

It is a subordinate clause which modifies a N or a NP and which begins with a Wh-word:

What he does with his money does not interest me.

I wonder **what he does with his money**

People **who smoke** annoy me.

3. To-INFINITIVE CLAUSES

They have a syntactic function as:

Subject (*To be neutral in this conflict* is out of question.)

Direct object (*He likes to relax.*)

Subject complementation (*The best excuse is to say that you have an examination tomorrow.*)

Appositive (přístavek) = phrase that supplements the word or phrase directly before it. (*Your ambition, to become a singer, requires motivation. Your question, why I am here, will soon be answered.*)

Adjectival complementation (*I am very eager to meet her.*)

4. ING CLAUSES

They may have a syntactic function as:

Subject (*Watching TV is sometimes good.*)

Direct object (*He enjoys playing practical jokes.*)

Subject complement (*Her first job was selling computers.*)

Appositive (*His current job, selling computers, is his first job.*)

Adjectival complement (*They are busy doing homework.*)

5. YES- NO NOMINAL CLAUSE

Do you know if you'll be late? Do you know whether it'll be there?

They are formed in the same way as wh-clauses but, instead of the wh-word, we use if or whether.

These clauses are almost always the objects of verbs although it is possible to see them functioning in other ways, grammatically, such as:

Whether he will be late is the question (subject)

I am surprised if you believe that (adjective complement)

6. TO- INFINITIVE CLAUSES

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Direct object (*He likes to relax.*)

Subject complementation (*The best excuse is to say that you have an examination tomorrow.*)

Appositive = phrase that supplements the word or phrase directly before it. (*Your ambition, to become a singer, requires motivation. Your question, why I am here, will soon be answered.*)

Adjectival complementation (*I am very eager to meet her.*)