



IIT Madras

ONLINE DEGREE

English I (Basic English)
Dr. Shreesh Chaudhary
Retd. Professor
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Chennai
Lecture 47
Complex Sentence- Part 1

Good afternoon, today we are going to talk about the structure of complex sentences in English and about their fundamental, very basic requirement, anything in nature, any phenomenon, any entity that we see in nature is built of units, block by block, box by box. So, a large unit has smaller units, a small unit has still a smaller unit inside, you know so form a little atom molecule to the entire cosmos.

You know, it is a combination of units in a certain order. That is true of physics. That is true also of linguistics. That is true also of the English language. So, so far, we have seen how sounds are produced, how words are formed, how phrases are formed, how clauses are constructed. Today, we will see, we looked at simple sentence, principal clause the other day. Today, we will look at the structure of complex sentences we will take about two or three units. Today in this unit, we talk about the first basics. What is a complex sentence? Next.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:06)

**Agreement Across Phrases &
Clauses**



- A “Complex Sentence” has a main clause and at least one subordinate clause.
- In the earlier units of this module we learnt how to identify a clause.



Well a complex sentence has a main clause and at least one subordinate clause, it could have more than one subordinate clause, but it definitely has at least one subordinate clause and a main clause. You know, in the earlier units, we talked about that. If you have any confusion, please go back to the earlier units. Do not be shy of revising. Lots of people do not learn everything in the first go itself.

So, they go back, and they help themselves there is nothing wrong about that. Neither is it a matter of shame or to feel embarrassed. You can also look at the books that we have recommended in this part of the course; they also have exercises; they also have guides and explanations, please look at them and please become familiar with concepts like principal clause, main clause, subordinate clause, simple and complex sentences, phrases, etc.

Otherwise, you will not have the kind of grip on the language that you ought to have and that you wish to have. So, a complex sentence has a main clause and at least one subordinate clause.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:45)

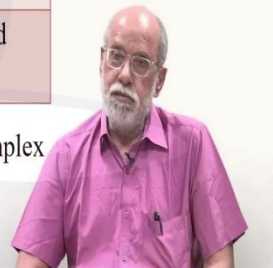
- Following is an instance of a complex sentence:



He was the only boy in the class who wore socks and shoes.

| Main Clause | Subordinate Clause |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| He was the only boy in the class | who wore socks and shoes |

- Together these clauses make it a complex sentence.



Next, look at the example. Look at this sentence. 'He was the only boy in the class who wore socks and shoes.' What is the main clause here? As you can see in the table done here, 'he was the only boy in the class'. This is the main clause. What is the subordinate clause? 'Who wore socks and shoes.' Together these two clauses make it a complex sentence without either of them. If you do not have a subordinate clause, it would not be a complex sentence. If you do not have the main clause, it would not be a sentence; it will remain you know only a clause. Next.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:35)

- Let us look at another example.

There were vague rumours that he had come from some English boys' school somewhere in Madras.

| Main Clause | Subordinate Clause |
|--------------------------|--|
| There were vague rumours | that he had come from some English boys' school somewhere in Madras. |



- So, this is also a complex sentence.

Look at another example; you can actually without looking at the table you can do it yourself. 'There were vague rumours that he had come from some English boys school somewhere in Madras.' How many clauses? I told you how to identify clauses. Every time there is a verb with a tense, that is a clause.

So, here the first verb with the tense is 'were', 'there were', 'there were vague rumours', this is the main clause then the remaining the remainder of the sentence is the subordinate clause, 'that he had come from some English boys school somewhere in Madras', this is the subordinate clause. So, these two clauses together make this a complex sentence. Next.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:40)

ACTIVITY

1. Look at the following paragraph, and underline complex sentences there. By using square brackets, also show main clause and subordinate clause, or clauses within the sentence.



Well, you know, as I said earlier, these things are learned best by doing, you know by soiling your hands. So, I am going to give you some sentences, some examples, try and see if you are

able to identify the main clause and then in the remaining part of the sentence, are you able to identify a subordinate clause, if you are able to do that, you have learned it, if you have not, if you are not able to do that, that means you are yet to learn.

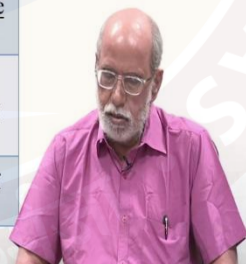
(Refer Slide Time: 06:22)

This Rajam was a rival to Mani. In his manner to Mani he assumed a certain nonchalance to which Mani was not accustomed. If Mani jabbed, Rajam jabbed; if Mani clouted, he clouted; if Mani kicked, he kicked. If Mani was the overlord of the class, Rajam seemed to be nothing less. And add to all this the fact that Rajam was a regular seventy percenter, second only to Sankar. There were sure indications that Rajam was the new power in the class.



ANSWERS

| Main Clause | Subordinate Clause |
|---|---|
| <u>In his manner to Mani he assumed a certain nonchalance</u> | <u>to which Mani was not accustomed</u> |
| <u>Rajam jabbed</u> | <u>If Mani jabbed,</u> |
| <u>he clouted</u> | <u>if Mani clouted</u> |
| <u>he kicked</u> | <u>if Mani kicked</u> |
| <u>Rajam seemed to be nothing less</u> | <u>If Mani was the overlord of the class</u> |
| <u>And add to all this the fact</u> | <u>that Rajam was a regular seventy percenter, second only to Sankar.</u> |
| <u>There were sure indications</u> | <u>that Rajam was the new power in the class.</u> |

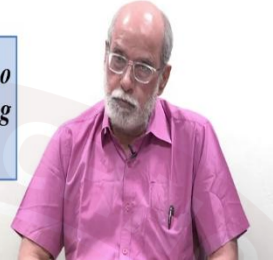


So, let us look at it, so the main clause is 'in his manner to Mani he assumed a certain nonchalance', subordinate clause here is 'to which Mani was not accustomed'. Go on, you know, do your own work and then compare and you will learn better rather than look at it and copy it takes a couple of minutes.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:51)

- Rules of agreement of number apply across the clauses. Any reference to noun or pronoun of the main clause in a noun, or pronoun or verb in the subordinate clause will have to have the same number.
- If noun in the main clause is singular, then reference to it must be in singular. See the following, for instance:

These are the senior girls from this school who have been selected for training in life saving skills.



Having identified now that we know what is the subordinate clause? What is the main clause, and now that we know how a complex sentence is made? Namely, a complex sentence is formed when you have the main clause followed or preceded by within the same sentence as a subordinate clause. Are there any rules that apply across the clauses to make it a sentence?

Why do we not call it two clauses rather than one sentence, we do not call it two clauses, we call such sentences one sentence, because there are some rules that apply across clauses and one of these rules is, the rule of agreement of number, across phrases, across clauses.

Any reference to a noun or pronoun he, she, it, they, we, you know one or two others, any reference to noun or pronoun of the main clause in a noun or pronoun or verb in the subordinate clause will have to have the same number. If that noun in the main clause is plural, then any reference to it in the subordinate clause will also have to be in plural.

On the other hand, if the noun or the pronoun to which we refer in the subordinate clause, is in singular in the main clause, then in the subordinate clause also, all references to it will have to be in singular. I will explain it to you with an example. If a noun in the main clause is singular, then reference to it must be in singular in the later clauses.


See the following example, for instance, 'these are the senior girls', this is the main clause, and in the main clause, what is the principal noun, senior girls is it singular or plural? Of course, it is plural, of course, it is plural. So, these are the senior girls. Now, next comes the point where we have to decide whether we use singular or plural. That point comes in half from the school who have, from the school who have been selected for training in life-saving skills.

'These are the senior girls from this school, who have been selected for training in life life-saving skills.' So, your main clause is 'these are the senior girls from this school'. Now, what is the noun here, noun phrase here? 'Senior girls', that is also the subject of the noun, is it in singular or plural it is of course in plural.

So, what is the going to be the number of the verb or other reference to it in the subordinate clause, of course, it is going to be plural. So, you say who have been selected for training in life-saving skills; you do not say who has been you know, you cannot say these are the senior girls from this school who has been selected.

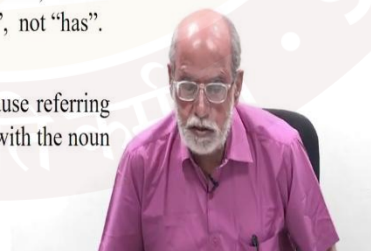
No, that is ungrammatical, or if on the other hand, this was the case, now this is the senior girl, this is the senior girl one only, this is the only girl from this school, then you cannot have, then you will have to have has, who has been selected for training in life-saving skills. So, this is what makes these two clauses you know, this is what puts these two clauses together, and they become a sentence. Without this binding force, without this binding phenomenon, you will not have a sentence, you may add the best only have clauses or not even that. Go to the next.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:38)



| Main Clause | Subordinate Clause |
|---|---|
| These are the senior girls from this school | who have been selected for training in life saving skills |

- But in the subordinate clause, you cannot write *who has been... That is ungrammatical, because “who” in this sentence refers to “girls”, a plural noun, in the earlier clause. Therefore, it takes “have”, not “has”.
- Any verb or noun in the subordinate clause referring to a noun in the main clause must agree with the noun in the main clause in number.



So, look at it, 'these are the senior girls from this school' that is the main clause, subordinate 'who have been selected for training in life-saving skills'. But in the subordinate clause, you cannot say who has been you do not have that freedom, because that then becomes ungrammatical. Why? Because who he or refers to the plural girls who here is not singular, 'these are the senior girls who', if it were 'this is the junior girl or this is the senior girl' that is one, you will still have who but who will be followed by has.

But in this case, because girls is in plural, you use a plural pronoun you know you use the plural verb marker have alright. So, you know the same thing here, that is ungrammatical because who in this sentence refers to girls, which is a plural noun in the earlier clause therefore it takes have, not has, if it was singular it will take has.

But because it is plural, it takes plural. So, we agree that a rule across the clauses is any verb or noun in the subordinate clause referring to a noun in the main clause must agree with the noun in the main clause in number. This will be true also of at present also of English, once you say, 'this is the pen', then you cannot say which are, you will have to say which is, 'this is the pen which is making miracles', 'this is the pen which is available', you cannot say, 'this is the pen which are available'.

No, that is wrong, because singular in the main clause will also get only a singular verb or reference to it relative word to it in singular. So, that is an exceptionless rule. There are no exceptions to this, yet a lot of people make mistakes concerning these things because they do not pay adequate attention. Once you pay adequate attention, you will realise that these things are nothing, all you have to do is to be little careful, use a lot of you know relevant material and do the practice and you will never go wrong.

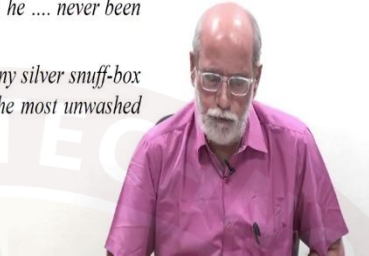
So, the rule here is any verb or noun in the subordinate clause, referring to a noun in the main clause must agree. That is why it is called agreement, must agree with the noun in the main clause in numbers. Alright. With whom? With a noun. Where? In the main clause. In what respect? In number. Once again with which should it agree? With the noun. Where can I find that noun? In the main clause. What does it have to agree with? Not in everything, nobody can agree with everything, but you know in number. Go next.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:18)

ACTIVITY



2. Look at the following sentences and add appropriate verb in the blank space in keeping with the number, singular or plural, of the noun.
- I would keep out of the way of policemen who an awful lot,' said Swaminathan. (is/are)*
 - The packet has potatoes that supplied by Amazon this morning. (was/were)*
 - As far as Swaminathan could remember, he never been within three yards of Rajam. (has/had)*
 - His father fussed about a little for his tiny silver snuff-box and the spotted kerchief, which the most unwashed thing in that house. (was/were)*



Look at the following sentence, and you can add an appropriate verb in the blank space in keeping with the number singular or plural of the noun. Say for example, in a, I would keep out of the way a policeman who ---- an awful lot said, Swaminathan. Now between who and an, what would you say is or are? That is the question once you do it right, you will start understanding and start getting it right, take a look.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:56)

ANSWERS



- I would keep out of the way of policemen who are an awful lot,' said Swaminathan.
- The packet has potatoes that were supplied by Amazon this morning.
- As far as Swaminathan could remember, he had never been within three yards of Rajam.
- His father fussed about a little for his tiny silver snuff-box and the spotted kerchief, which was the most unwashed thing in that house.

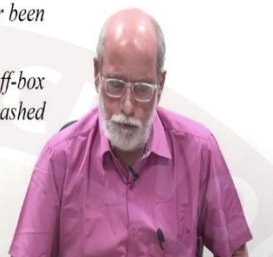
Here are the answers.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:03)

ACTIVITY



2. Look at the following sentences and add appropriate verb in the blank space in keeping with the number, singular or plural, of the noun.
 - a. *I would keep out of the way of policemen who an awful lot,' said Swaminathan. (is/are)*
 - b. *The packet has potatoes that supplied by Amazon this morning. (was/were)*
 - c. *As far as Swaminathan could remember, he never been within three yards of Rajam. (has/had)*
 - d. *His father fussed about a little for his tiny silver snuff-box and the spotted kerchief, which the most unwashed thing in that house. (was/were)*



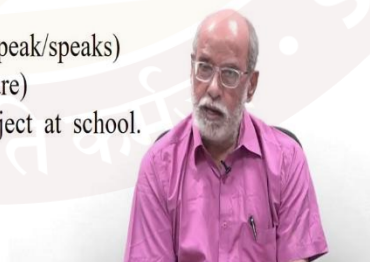
So, do all the sentences actually more. So, that you become not only correct, you become also confident in. A lot of people are correct. But for want of enough exercise, they are not always confident. I like you not only to be correct but also to be confident. So, all of these sentences that done there, go next, go next.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:37)

ADDITIONAL EXERCISE



1. Maldives is a beautiful destination. Many people there for a vacation. (go/goes)
2. I don't enjoy winters. Two degrees too cold for me. (is/are)
3. Sushmita know how the incident occurred? (does/do)
4. A lot of natives here Hindi. (speak/speaks)
5. Tennis my favourite sport. (is/are)
6. Economics my favourite subject at school. (was/were)



Some additional exercises. You have done this kind of grammar, even before, even at our school and we have given you exercises here. We have given you materials here, books, etc. here; these books are not meant to be kept forever, only in the library. These books are meant to be used frequently as often as you need to use them. Quite a lot of people, quite a lot of

learners, quite a lot of students postponed the learning task; they have a doubt. What's the pronunciation of nonchalance and you say, come on I will look at it later.

Do not do that; do not do that. You know that is a learning opportunity that you are missing. If somebody tells you to come to play would you miss that chance, it is just like that. It is a learning opportunity. Once you have a doubt in your mind, immediately go to the dictionary or consult, contact your teacher or in the least contact us and we are duty-bound to answer you, no matter where we get the answer from.

So, look at this sentence. Maldives is a beautiful destination. It is indeed so; I am sure you know where it is. It is in the south-western tip of India, a group of islands a little away from the Arabian Sea coast of India. It is a beautiful destination, definitely. Many people would you say go there or go there.

We know that nouns become plural by taking s es, how do verbs become plural or singular. Verbs become plural by not taking s and es, verse become singular by taking s and es. So, that is the case here. In the first occurrence of Maldives is plural. Maldives is a beautiful destination. Now, all references to it will have to be in plural.

So, you say many people go there. You do not say, 'many people goes there'. 'Many people go there for a vacation.' Look at the next, 'I do not enjoy winters'. 'I do not enjoy winters', why? 2 degrees because 2 degrees, too cold for me, each person has his or her tolerance, threshold level, how much can you take?

If you look at degrees, then there are two nouns it is plural, you will have to see are, but if you look at 2 degrees as a unit, then it is a singular, So, what it says is enough for you 2 degrees is too cold for me. You say is, why do you say is? Because it makes a unit? Would you say? 'Do Sushmita know' or 'does Sushmita know'? Obviously, you know I am quite confident, no one has made a mistake here.

Sushmita is a singular person, only one person, and therefore we know we will have to tell her sorry Sushmita you are a singular number, and therefore, you should say a singular verb, you should use a singular verb, and that is why we get, does Sushmita know how the incident occurred?

Next, a lot of natives here speak Hindi. That means who is the noun here? A lot or here or natives it is natives. Is it singular or plural? Or no, it is plural, and then, you know the

sentence goes. A lot of natives here, speak Hindi. But if it were only one person, only one native here speaks Hindi then it becomes 'speaks'.

So, that is the rule. Tennis looks like apparently a plural noun. But it is not actually a plural noun. It is a very false impression. It is a singular noun Tennis. Tennis is my favourite sport. Economics once again, it looks like a plural because of s at the end, but it is not so you cannot say, 'economic was' or 'were' my favourite subjects.

So, you let s come in economics and then you know, it is a single subject. So, you will say, 'economics is my favourite subject at school' or if it were I mean anything like that where you have a false s, you do not have to be guided by that; you have to ask yourself, what does it represent? Does it represent many units or one it represent one, it is the name of a subject, and the subject is singular.

Therefore, we will say economics was, or economics continues to be, or you know my favourite subject, you cannot say, you do not say, 'economics were my favourite subject at school'. Summarising there are lots of exercises of this kind, everywhere, all you need to do is to pay a little attention.

You have any number of websites we will give you reference to some sites. But there are any number of references to websites, where you get a lot of exercises, even in this kind of thing and doing you can do those exercises, check your answers with the answers given wherever you are wrong, please relearn that part.

Whenever you are right, pat yourself on the back and move on. That is the way to learn. All we are doing here is to try and tell you how you can teach yourself, nobody else can learn from you. It is only you who has to learn for yourself, and this is the road. This is how it goes, namely.

Look at sentences in a paragraph. Remove the verbs from there and then ask yourself now I am going to fill it in and fill it in. Ditto for you know, other kinds of a phenomenon you know other just as other things are also learned through practice. So is language. Thank you very much. Good luck and have a good day.