



# IIT Madras

## BSc Degree

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## **English - II (Advanced English)**

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### **Questions in English Complex Sentences (Embedded Sentences)**

Welcome to the class. Today, we are going to discuss two things in a sentence. We are going to look at formation of questions and, in particular, questions as embedded sentences within a larger sentence. So, for that purpose, we will be looking at embedded sentences as well. So, these are the two important aspects of sentence.

When we look at a sentence, a sentence has several components in it. Words are, words belong to different categories when they are not part of a sentence. Such as words are nouns, pronouns, or adjectives, adjectives modify nouns, and then we have verbs, and we have adverbs which modify words, and then we have prepositions and other stuff.

We know these words have different functions within a sentence. So, when they become part of a sentence, words have relationship with one another, they are part of a phrase, and then they are part of a larger thing. And there are several things that happen, several phenomena that takes place in making of a sentence. Once we understand the interconnectedness of words within a phrase and phrases within a sentence, it becomes easier for us to understand the formation of a sentence within a sentence and computation of that sentence in human mind, that is, how human mind treats a sentence.

And again, I would underline for the purpose of this class that once we understand the formation, through the process of computation in human mind, through the process human subconscious applies in making these sentences, we are through with learning and these parts get apparent in our writing, in our speaking and we feel way more confident when we speak. So, for the purpose of speaking with confidence, that is communicative confidence, we need to look at the underlying processes which operate in a particular fashion.

And a careful attention to these things also helps us towards attaining accuracy, which is also known as grammaticality. So, let us, let us look at how they work. They are, they are pretty simple stuff, they only need our careful attention.

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## Sentence and Complex Sentence

- Sentence = [Subject + Predicate]
- Predicate = [Verb + Object(s) [adjuncts/adverbs]]
- Complex Sentence:
- Subject + Predicate [embedded sentence as object]



So, two things today, what is it that we call an embedded sentence or a complex sentence? In... under what circumstances the sentence becomes complex? And what are the differences between a simple sentence and a complex sentence? We are first going to look at this part and then we see the implications of this understanding in the process of questions. So, we are going to, we are going to start looking at that.

So, what a sentence is essentially, in a, in simple words, a combination of subject and predicate through agreement process. The agreement process is something very simple. That is the features of subject that is number, person, particularly in English, have to match with the features on the verb within the predicate. This is what we call agreement. So, subject and predicate are not two separate entities, rather they are combined through sometimes visible, sometimes invisible process called agreement.

Predicates have verbs and objects within them, and sometimes they do have adjuncts as well in the form of adverbs. Objects appear in a sentence only when a verb is transitive, or a ditransitive, that is, in the, in the context of an intransitive verb, we do not have object in a sentence. So, the presence or absence of an object in a sentence is totally contingent upon the nature of the verb. That is, how we understand a sentence.

Now, what is a complex sentence? How do we, how do we understand it and what happens to a simple sentence that we call it a complex sentence? Now, in order to understand complex sentence, it is very important to understand what we have just discussed as a, as simple sentence. So, what makes a complex sentence, what makes a sentence complex is the following. Even a complex sentence has a subject. Now, we look at predicate carefully. Within a predicate, we have a verb and if we have another sentence within a predicate that makes it a complex sentence.

How do we have another sentence within a predicate? This sentence becomes the object of the verb in the predicate as an embedded sentence. So, when we have an embedded sentence within the predicate, as an object of the verb, the sentence becomes complex. This is what we call a complex sentence. And the embedded sentence is called either an embedded sentence or a subordinate clause. You will hear these two terms repeatedly from us and also in different grammars, and they sound like we need to look at it something very carefully and separately. True, we need to look at it carefully.

That is true, but it is very simple to understand a subordinate clause is a sentence. An embedded clause is a sentence therefore, we can call them as embedded sentences as well, but they have to be embedded in a particular way. And this embedding happens as the object of the verb. Now, you would, you would need to understand how a sentence becomes object of a verb. This is all that we need to know about a complex sentence.

So, so far you have seen that a verb has either no objects in when they are intransitive. Sometimes, verbs have one object when they are transitive. There is yet another type of transitive verb, which is known as ditransitive when there are two objects. So, I sleep early is an example of an intransitive sentence because sleep is an intransitive verb. And there is no object of sleep in the sentence.

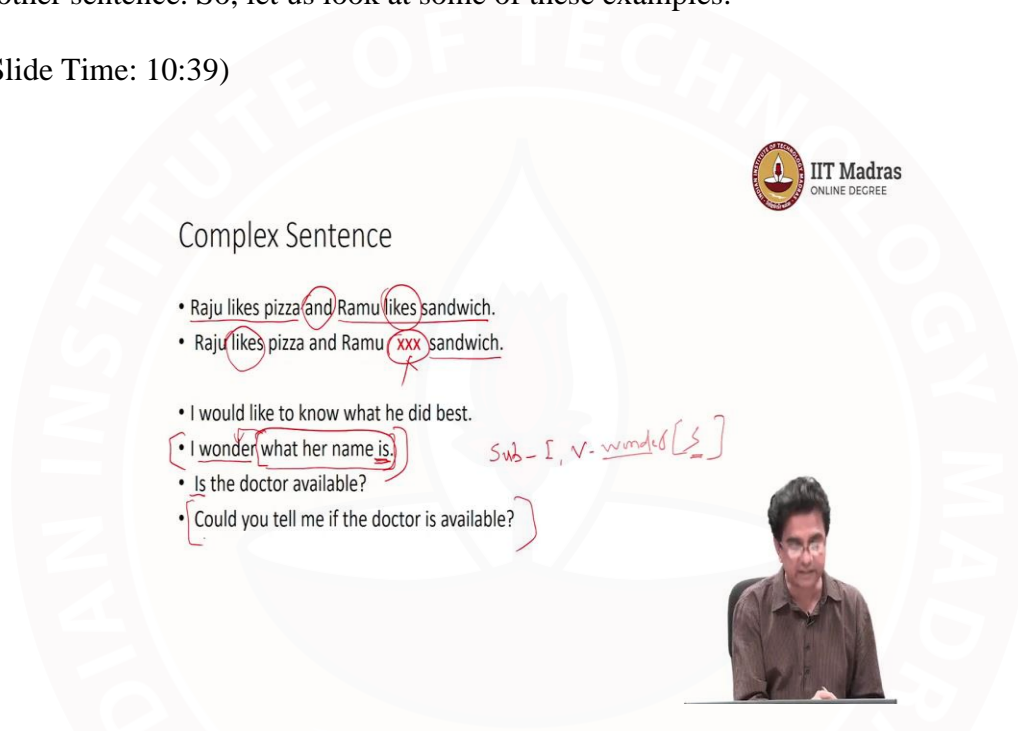
I like pizza, 'like' is a transitive verb because a noun phrase pizza is the object or complement of the verb like. I teach English to the students at IIT, Madras. I teach English to the students at IIT, Madras. So, 'teach' is a ditransitive verb where 'English' is the direct object and 'to the students' is an indirect object, 'at IIT, Madras' is adverb, is an adjunct.

There are some words in some cases which need a sentence as an object. Yes, you have heard it right. There are some verbs which need a sentence as its object. And under such circumstances,

when we embed a full sentence as object of that verb, this sentence is called a complex sentence. So, we are going to look at some examples of complex sentences. But before that, I want to draw your attention to another sentence. Hear me out carefully.

A complex sentence is also essentially a simple sentence because it does not violate the requirements of a sentence. You will still have a subject, you will still have a verb, and you will still have an object. It is only the case that in place of a verb, in place of an object, you have, you have another sentence. So, let us look at some of these examples.

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**Complex Sentence**

- Raju likes pizza and Ramu likes sandwich.
- Raju likes pizza and Ramu ~~xxx~~ sandwich.
- I would like to know what he did best.
- I wonder what her name is.
- Is the doctor available?
- Could you tell me if the doctor is available?

Sub - I, V - wonder [S]

*(Note: The slide includes a video feed of a lecturer in the bottom right corner.)*

So, I... look at this sentence. I would like to know what he did best. I would like to know what he did best. In this, this is an example of a complex sentence- I wonder what her name is. So, look at this, this verb 'wonder' is an example of, is an example of a type of verb which needs the whole sentence as an object. Look at this, what is the subject here? 'I'. What is the verb, 'wonder', and what is the object of the verb, this whole sentence which is 'what her name is'. So, when you have a verb, which needs another sentence as the object, it becomes an example of a complex sentence.

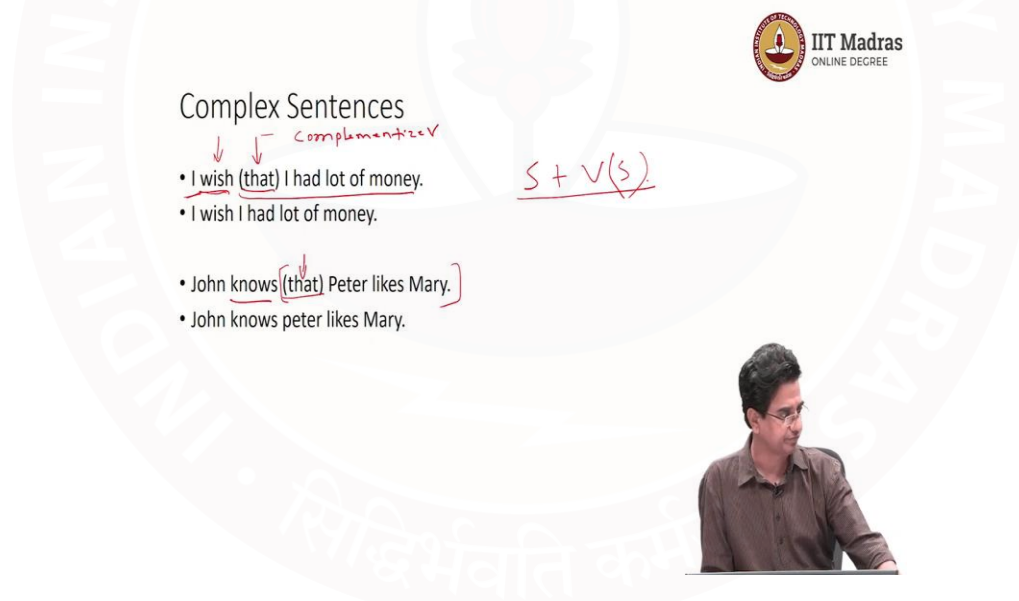
Now, let me show you what is not a complex sentence. The first sentence on this slide Raju likes pizza and Ramu likes sandwich. There are two sentences coordinated with a conjunction. This is not a complex sentence. We can say the same sentence like Raju likes pizza and Ramu sandwich.

That is, under certain cases, when we are talking about two people liking two different things, we can drop one of them here and the sentence is still okay. But still, this is not an example of a complex sentence.

So, a complex sentence becomes complex only when you have another sentence embedded within it further as an object of the verb. That is as the object of the verb in the matrix by the predicate. So, here is another term, when we say embedded sentence, an embedded sentence can only be embedded in a matrix one, matrix means main one. So, the terms like main clause, subordinate clause, matrix clause, embedded clause.

So, the matrix is the whole thing. I wonder what her name is, this is the whole thing. Within this thing, this one is a subordinate clause, which is embedded as an object of this verb wonder. So, I will come back to rest of the sentences in a minute.

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**Complex Sentences**

*Complementizer*

- I wish (that) I had lot of money.
- I wish I had lot of money.

$S + V(S)$

- John knows (that) Peter likes Mary.
- John knows peter likes Mary.

The slide features a large, faint watermark of the IIT Madras logo in the background. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video inset showing a man with glasses and a brown shirt, likely the lecturer, speaking.

So, look at some more examples of that, I wish that I had lot of money. Here, I want to draw your attention to this being a complex sentence, that, this is the subject of the, subject of the sentence, 'I' is the subject of the sentence, 'wish' is the verb of the sentence. And this is the matrix verb that is the main verb. And the object of this sentence is the whole embedded, whole sentence embedded in it.



So, you can also test this, this whole embedded clause, whether or not it is the, it is the object of the verb. You can simply ask a question, what? I wish what? I can also say I wish money. I wish happiness. But when we say 'I wish that I had lot of money', that 'I had a lot of money' is also the object of this verb 'wish'. So, with this kind of object, the sentence is a complex one, because it has another subordinate or embedded clause in it. I wish I had a lot of money.

So, I also want to draw your attention to another point, that in English, this element 'that' is called a complementizer. Understand? This whole sentence is the object of the verb. In other words, this is also a complement of the verb. So, when we introduce a bigger complement, we use, the terms that we use is called complementizer. So, this does not have any literal meaning. We need to know that this does not have any literal meaning. It is just a functional element in the sentence, it is called a complementizer.

Sometimes, this complementizer is optional, like in this case. So, you can also say, I wish that I had lot of money. Or you can also say, I wish I had a lot of money. So, there are situations in which we can drop the complementizers. It is, it is there are straightforward rules as to when we can drop a complementizer and when we must have a complementizer obligatorily in the sentence. I leave that question aside for the time being.

And we need to move to the main points of discussion for this class, that is, we need to discuss two things, a complement complex sentence and questions in a complex sentence. So just, just look at another example. John knows that Peter likes Mary. John knows Peter likes Mary. It is possible to, to drop this complementizer because and in such cases, we can say, we can call it, we call it optional.

Now, if you work a little harder on this, if you look at some of the sentences at this level of learning English, under what circumstances we drop them, and under what circumstances we do not, you get to know the, you can get, you can figure it out on your own. My apologies here. I am not giving you more details. I promise it comes at a later stage. But it was important to introduce this point to you, at this point, as an example of a complex sentence.

So, a verb like 'no', a verb like 'wish', and, and many more verbs, there is no specific list of verbs can take the entire sentence as a complement, as an object, and thus makes the sentence a complex sentence. So, one more time. If you look at this, this is also just a simple sentence which

has a subject and a verb. Within the predicate, you have a verb, the only thing is, instead of a simple noun, the object of the verb is a sentence. So, that is, that can be called a complex sentence.

But essentially, this is also a simple sentence. I leave this point also here without taking it forward. But I... if, if you understand this part, how a complex sentence is also a simple sentence, then you understand a big chunk. A big thing about the computation of sentences in human mind. And when you pay attention to this, your own understanding of verbs, objects and in your writing becomes much clearer.

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### Agreement

- Agreement marking
  - Person
  - Number
  - Gender
- Ramu loves cricket.
  - Ramu = III Person/Singular
  - Love = Hosts matching information





## Tense

	SINGULAR	PLURAL	
• Present	Is	Are	Am
• Past	Was	Were	
• Future	Shall/Will		



## Questions in a simple sentence

- Raju loves pizza.
- What does [Raju love ....]?
- Raju loved pizza.
- What did [Raju love ....]?

*Content*

- Raju is coming to Chennai tomorrow.
- Is [Raju coming to Chennai tomorrow.]

*Y/N*



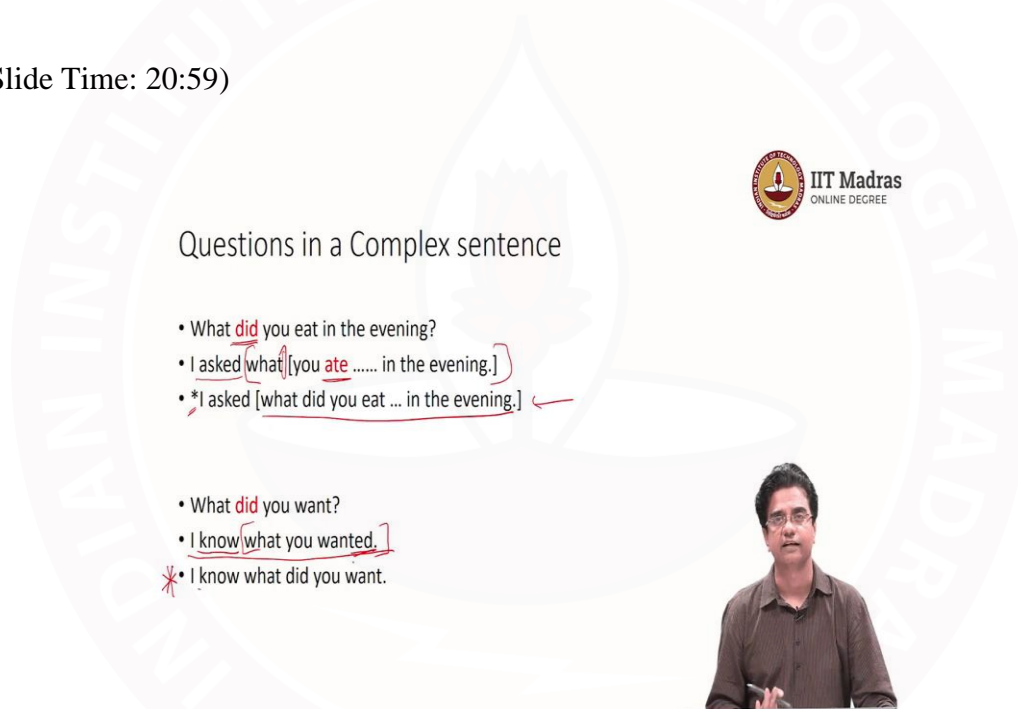
So, I take you to other parts of the discussion today. So agreement, marking in terms of number and person and tense marking as singular and plural, they continue to play a role in making questions. So, as we know, questions are, questions are very simple. When we say Raju loves pizza. So, when we have a sentence like what does Raju love, this is a question.

And we understand that in question, not only a question word occurs at the initial position of a sentence in English, and not only we have a question word, but we also see tens and agreement getting extracted out of the verb in the context of a question sentence and comes out of the

sentence. That is if they get fronted. That, that is what we see in the present tense in these examples, and in these examples, we see them happening in the past tense.

And in these third examples, we see them happening in the present tense, which is a type of yes-no type of question and these are content type of question. You understand this very well that these questions are called content type, because, as a response to these questions, we need to provide some content and as a response to this question, the second one, which is known as yes or no type of questions, we can only answer, we can answer the question with yes or no. Hence, this, this type is called a yes-no type of question.

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**Questions in a Complex sentence**

- What did you eat in the evening?
- I asked what [you ate ..... in the evening.]
- \*I asked [what did you eat ... in the evening.] ←

- What did you want?
- I know what you wanted.]
- \*I know what did you want.

Now comes when we look at question sentences within a complex sentence. You know that very well that question sentences within a, within a complex sentence, we have a subordinate clause, we have another subordinate clause, we have another embedded clause. So, with that embedded clause, if we have a question sentence as an embedded clause, then what happens, is all that we want to do. So, look at, look at few examples, and then we can deduct the rules that work in embedded clause.

The, the simple question is what did you eat in the evening? You can, we can also ask, I asked what you ate in the evening. So, when we have as the subordinate clause that is, as an object of

the verb 'ask', if we have a whole clause and that clause is a question sentence, then we don't see tense getting fronted. Many times, when we speak English in India, we make this mistake. And this is one such big thing that we need to fix to make our English more impressive and effective.

And this is a very simple rule, that when questions sentences are part of a complex sentence, when questions sentences are embedded within a larger sentence, then there is no fronting of tense and agreement. Rule, answer is very simple for this. So, I will tell you the answer in a minute. Please look at this sentence one more time. The sentence is I asked what you ate in the evening.

You see here, unlike the fronting of past tense in a simple sentence, in a simple question sentence, this verb is still in past and there is no, there is nothing here extracted out of the sentence with what. So, you have a sentence, I asked what you ate in the evening. If you say the same things sentence like I asked, What did you eat in the evening? The way we have a simple, simple question sentence, then it becomes ungrammatical.

Many a time, we make a mistake, and we say the sentence this way. Whereas, if we, when we understand that in a complex sentence, when a question sentence is part of the main sentence as embedded one, in such a situation, we don't have extraction of tense. And this part of information I don't recommend you to memorize, I want you to understand. And please see the distinction. When we have a question sentence, extraction takes place, extraction of tense and agreement marking takes place. So, the rule still holds that extraction takes place in the context of a question sentence.

When this sentence becomes part of an, part of a main clause as an embedded one, this is not a question. Hence, no extraction. Extraction happens, that is extraction of tense and agreement happens only in the context of a question sentence. If you read it carefully, this is not a question, I asked, what you ate? It's a, it is a simple declarative sentence, hence no extraction. What did you want? This is a simple question. This is a simple sentence, a simple question. I know what you wanted, look at this.

When we say I know what you wanted in this sentence, the verb no requires this whole thing as the object. And as an object, this embedded clause does not have tense extracted out of it, out of the verb want, you see the verb here wanted. Another key point is, when we have this whole

thing, this is not really a question. And if we say, I know what you wanted, then this sentence becomes ungrammatical.

So, we need to know, we need to understand and we need to practice this that within a complex sentence, if you have questions sentence as an embedded one, then there is no extraction of tense and agreement. Unlike the one, unlike the way it works for a very simple sentence, very simple question sentence. So, the rule is still continuous for the simple sentence, simple question sentence, but not question sentence as embedded one. Examples should be clearer to you.

So, when we look at, look at this sentence from where we started, I wonder what her name is? Look at this. As a simple sentence, simple question sentence we can say what is her name, but when this whole sentence is part of the... as an object of the main predicate wonder, we say I wonder what her name is this tense marking is not extracted. It serves certain functions. So, at this point, I should also let you know, certain function of this thing. A, you know that this is not a question sentence.

And so, we use these kinds of sentences in order to know something to make our speech, less direct. See, when it is a grammatical sentence, you can say, what is her name? You can, you can ask a friend, what is her name? This is too direct a question. However, if you make this as an embedded sentence and say, I wonder what her name is, it still shows your curiosity. The embedded meaning is still the fact that you want to know the name of an individual, but it does not remain a direct question.

Look at another example. You can ask a question, is the doctor available? It is a perfectly grammatical sentence. It is a question sentence, tense is getting extracted out of this, out of the main sentence. It is a yes-no question. Very nice, nothing grammatical about it. But in the uses, in the, in speaking, in order to make it less direct, we can ask, could you tell me if the doctor is available? It is still a question. Look at this. Could you tell me, the main clause is also a question sentence? Could you tell me if the doctor is available? That is how we make a question.

So, when we look at the sentences like this, I know what you wanted, is making a question less direct, instead of saying what did you want? So, there, functionally a complex sentence has complex sentences used as a marker of politeness. But structurally, we know that a complex sentence is also essentially a simple sentence, there is nothing complex about it. It still remains,

retains the same structure of subject and predicate connected with agreement. The only distinction is within the predicate, as a transitive verb, in place of, in place of an object it has the whole sentence as the object of it.

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Things to notice ...

- A complex sentence has an embedded sentence as an object of the verb in the matrix predicate.
- A coordinated sentence is not a complex sentence.
- Question sentences as embedded one does not have extraction of tense out of the verb.



So, when we summarize this part, there are only three things that we get. We can conclude the whole discussion in three points; that a complex sentence has an embedded sentence is an object of the verb in the matrix predicate. That is all is a complex sentence. You please go through this thing, check it, do some practices, look at your own sentences, look at the content that you are reading and check these discussions in that and I am positive, it will have helpful impact on your learning exercises.

A coordinate sentence, coordinated sentence is not a complex sentence and a question sentence as embedded one does not have extraction of tense out of the verb, because that is not a question. So, keeping these three things in mind, we conclude the discussion here. Looking forward to a discussion with you on these topics. Until next time, thank you and bye-bye.