**1.Phrase and Clause**

**A phrase** is a group of words which stand together and have a particular meaning. It is a part rather than the whole of a sentence.

**A clause** is a group of words, consisting of at least a subject and a finite verb. Unlike phrases, a clause may sometimes form a sentence.

**Note:** Number of finite verbs in a sentence is equal to the number of clauses in that sentence.

**2.The Difference**

Both phrases and clauses are groups of words. A phrase functions like a single part of speech. Because a phrase doesn’t have both a subject and a verb, it can not function as a sentence. A clause necessarily has both a subject and a verb, though at times the subject may be implied. Depending on the kind a clause can act like a sentence or as the part of a sentence.

**3.Types of phrases**

There are five types of phrases in English: 1. Noun Phrase (NP) 2. Adjective Phrase (AjP) 3. Adverb Phrase (AvP) 4. Prepositional Phrase (PP) and 5. Verb Phrase (VP)

Of these, the first three i.e. NPs, AjPs and AvPs have the same basic structure:

[(Mn) H (Mn)]

All these phrases must have a head word (H). The head word may be preceded and/or followed by (modifier(s) - (M)). Modifiers make the meaning of the head word more specific. They are of two types: *a)* **Premodifier** (a modifier which comes before noun head) and *b)***Postmodifier** (a modifier which comes after noun head)**.** Superscript *n* indicates that there can be one or more than one modifier in a phrase.

(1) NP (Myellow Hbutton) : (‘yellow’ as a premodifier)

(2) NP (HsomethingModd) : (‘odd’ as a postmodifier)

A PP has the structure of P+NP:

(3) PP (­Pin MtheHmarket)

VP has a completely different and complex structure. We will discuss its structure separately.

**3.1Noun Phrase (NP)**:

A noun phrase behaves like a noun. It comprises a noun (n) as a head and other associated words all of which we can call modifiers. It can function as a subject (S), as an object (O), as a subject complement (C) or as an adverbial (A):

(4) [**NPS (**MdtTheHngirlMin blue frock) is NPC(MdtmyHnsister).]

(5) [I bought NPO(MdtanotherHncar) NP-A( MajlastHnweek).]

In(4), there are two noun phrases: 1) ‘*the girl in blue frock’* and 2) ‘*my sister’*, where noun heads are *‘girl’* and *‘sister’* respectively. The noun heads in both the NPs are preceded by a determiner (dt), each functioning as a pre\modifier. The embedded PP, ‘*in blue frock’,* in the first NP is a postmodifier. The first NP in this sentence is functioning as a subject (NP-S) and the second as complement (NP-C).

In (5) the first NP is functioning as an object (NP-O) and the second is functioning as an adverbial:

STRUCTURE

(a) The head of an NP is generally a noun.

(b) The premodifiers of an NP may be determiners (*that* book*, two* books), adjectives (*green* colour), nouns (*neem* tree), etc.

(c) The postmodifiers on an NP may be PPs (the girl in *blue frock*), relative clauses (the teacher *whom I like most*), adverbs (the girl *upstairs*), adjectives (something *nasty*), etc.

**3.2 Prepositional Phrase (PP)**: A prepositional phrase is a combination of preposition plus the object of that preposition (noun, pronoun or an NP):

(6)[He is sleeping PP(on the carpet).]

In (6) ‘*on the carpet’* is a prepositional phrase. The phrase consists of a preposition (p) ‘*on*’ and a noun phrase ‘*the carpet’* where ‘*carpet’* is the noun head and ‘*the*’ is a pre-modifier.

PPs generally function as adverbials:

(7) [PP(By Monday morning), we had arrived pp(at Mathura Junction).]

In (7), both the PPs are functioning as adverbials.

In NPs, AjPs, PPs and AvPs, PPs act as postmodifiers e.g.

(8) [The girl (PP(by the table) PP(with carved legs)) is my sister.] (the first PP acting as the postmodifier of the NP,*’the girl’*, and the second PP acting as the postmodifier of the PP ,*’by the table*’)

(9) [Until recently the civil war had been largely unreported PP (in the press).]

(PP acting as the postmodifier of the AjP, ‘*largely unreported*’)

(10) [I slipped quietly out PP(of the back door).]

(PP acting as the postmodifier of the AvP, ‘*quietly out’*)

STRUCTURE: As already discussed, PPs have the structure like those of NPs, with an extra elements added to them- PPs =PNPs.

**3.3 Adjective Phrase (AjP)**: An adjective phrase functions as an adjective (aj) or as a complement. It adds meaning in the properties of a noun or pronoun.

11. [Many like AjP (MajlightHajgreen) colour.]

12. [ He is AjP (MavveryHajintelligent).]

AjP in (11) is functioning as an adjective, modifying the noun *‘colour’*, while the AjP in (12) is the complement of the pronoun ‘*he*’.

STRUCTURE: An adjective phrase always has an adjective acting as the head.

(13) [Many of the exercises are AjP(MavfairlyHajdifficult).]

In (13) ‘*fairly difficult’* is an AdjP where ‘*difficult*’ is an adjective acting as the head while ‘fairly’ is a premodifier.

The head of an adjective may be positive (good), comparative (better) or superlative (best).

Premodifiers are generally adverbs (av), typically adverbs of degree (too, very, extremely, etc.)

Postmodifiers can be either PPs or adverbs.

(14) [Many people are AjP(MavveryHajpoorMavindeed).]

(15) [The train was AjP(MavratherMavtooHajcrowdedMPPfor a comfortable journey).]

**3.4 Adverb Phrase (AvP):** An adverb phrase functions as an adverbial.

(16) [He ran AvP(MavveryHavfast).]

(17) [She answered the telephone AvP(MavratherHavsleepily.).]

STRUCTURE: The structure of an AvP is like that of an AjP, except that the head of an AvP is an adverb.

**3.5 Verb Phrase (VP):** A verb phrase acts as a predicator (P). It can be a group of auxiliary/modal verb plus main verb or just a main verb.

(18) [He (VP is reading) a novel.]

STRUCTURE: VPs generally have two kinds of element i.e. Auxiliaries (Aux) and Main verb (Mv). The most general structure of a VP can be **a)** (Aux) + (Mv), **b)** (Aux) (Aux) + (Mv), **and c)** (Aux) (Aux) (Aux) + (Mv), where *Aux* can be, a modal (m) verb, any form of the verb ‘have’ (hv), any form of the verb ‘do’ (do) and/or any form the verb ‘be’ (be). *Mv* is always a main verb (v). See, for example

(19) [She VP(AuxbeisMvvworking).]

(20) [She VP(Auxmshould AuxbebeMvvworking).]

(21) [She VP(AuxhvhasAuxbebeenMvvworking) since morning).]

(22) [She VP(AuxmshouldAuxhvhaveAuxbebeenMvvworking).]

**4.Elements of the Clause**

There are five elements of a clause: Subject (S), Predicator (P), Object (O), Complement (C) and Adverbial (A). Subject and Predicator is the minimum requirement for giving a group of words the form of a clause.

(1) [S(He) P(slept).]

(2) [ S(Many people) P(are painting) O(their house) C(white) A(these days).]

VPs are Predicators. Subject generally precedes Predicator.

There are two kinds of Object: Direct Object (Od) and Indirect Object (Oi). Indirect Objects are optional and can often be replaced by Adverbials, see, for example

(3) [ S(He) P(gave) Oi(me) Od(a book).]

(4) [ S(He) P(gave) Od(a book) PP(to me).]

Complement looks like an object but actually itspecifies/characterizes the subject or the object in the clause. There are two kinds of Complement: Subject Complement (Cs) and Object Complement (Co). Subject Complement characterizes the Subject while Object Complement characterizes the Object. Look at the following examples:

(5) [S(Rohan) P(is) *Cs*(a good student)]

(6) [S(Every teacher) P(considers) O(Rohan) Co(a good student).]

Adverbials generally give extra information, which can normally be omitted from a clause. There is no fixed number of Adverbials in a clause, and they are mobile; they can appear in the beginning, in the middle or in the end of a clause. See, for example,

(7) [S(He A(rarely) P(goes) A(to the market) A(nowadays).]

(8) [A(Nowadays), S(He A(rarely) P(goes) A(to the market).]

(9) [S(He P(goes) A(to the market) A(rarely) A(nowadays).]

In addition to the basic elements, *S P O C A,* a clause may also have the elements like Conjunctions (cj), Interjections (ij) and Vocatives (Voc):

(10) [cj(And) A(then) S(we) P(did) O(it).]

(11) [ij(Ugh), S(It P(is) *Cs*(green tea) *Cs*(again).]

(12) [P(Read) O(the book), Voc(Mohan).]

**5.** **Coordinate and Subordinate Clauses**

If there are two or more clauses in a sentence, there can either be a relation of coordination or of subordination between them; they can be of equal status/rank (coordinate) or one can be the part of the other clause (subordinate). A coordinate clause does not depend on something else in the sentence for meaning. A subordinate clause relies on coordinate clause for meaning. Independently, it can neither form a sentence nor convey a complete thought. Look at the following examples:

(13)( [I can’t speak well] but [I can write in good structure].)

Since both the clauses in (13) can exist as independent sentences and can independently convey a thought, they are of equal rank, hence they are coordinate clauses.

(14)( [I will give you a chocolate] [if you bring a glass of water]. )

In (14) ‘*if you bring a glass of water’* is a subordinate clause because it alone can’t exist as a sentence, and it can’t convey a complete thought unless seen in relation to the other clause in the sentence.

**5.1 Subordinate Clauses (SCl)**

Subordinate clauses can be recognized by their function and structure.

A subordinate clause can function as a noun, an adjective or as an adverb in a sentence. So, on the basis of function, there are three types of subordinate clauses:

**A. Noun Clause (NCl):** A noun clause functions as a subject, an object or as a subject/object complement (a noun, adjective or a pronoun that follows a linking verb) in a sentence. Look at the following sentences:

(15)(NCl[*What you read*] determines your mental schema.) (as a subject)

(16)(She did not know **NCl** [*why the teacher was angry with her*]*.*) (as an object)

(17)(Money is **NCl**[*what I desire most*]*.*)(as a subject complement)

**Note:**NCls may begin with ***Wh- words***, as you can see in (15), (16) and in (17).They may begin with ***that*** or they may have a ***zero that***. Compare (18) and (19), for example:

(18)(They say NCl[*honesty is the best policy*].)

(19)(They say NCl[*that honesty is the best policy*].)

**B. Adverb Clause (AvCl):** An adverb clause functions as an adverb. It answers the questions like- *Why? When? Where? What if? With what result? For what purpose?* Adverb clauses begin with the subordinating conjunctions like *because, unless, if, when*, *although*, *as, since, so that,* etc. See, for example

(20)(AvCl[*Since I am responsible for the delay*]*,* I should be punished.) (why?)

(21)( AvCl[*When Tata Nano was launched*]*,* Ratan Tata was positive of its market. ] (when?)

(22)(We go **AvCl**[*wherever we find wor*k].)(Where?)

(23)(The terrorist was sentenced to death **AvCl**[*so that others should learn a lesson*]*.*) (For what purpose?)

(24)(AvCl[*If he joins us tomorrow*], he will teach Phonetics.) (What if?)

**C. Relative Clause (RCl):** Relative clauses function like postmodifiers in NPs and PPs. A relative clause generally begins with a relative pronoun (who, whom, which, that, whichever, whoever, whomever). See, for example

(25) ( NP(MTheHteacherM-RCl[***whom*** *I love most*]*,* has resigned.

(26)( NP(MTheHnovelM-RCl[***that*** *won the Man Booker Prize*]***,*** did not sell much.)

(27) I went PP(PtoMtheHmarketM-RCl[***which*** *is famous for low cost mobiles*].)

Note: Like in NCls, a RCl may also begin with a ***Wh- word*, *that*** or with a ***zero*** relative pronoun.

Relative clauses can be **Restrictive (R-RCl) and Non-restrictive (NR-RCl)** in nature.

A restrictive clause is essential for the meaning of a sentence because it limits the interpretation of the noun or pronoun it modifies.

A non-restrictive clause adds extra information to the sentence. The meaning of the sentence would not change if the clause were to be omitted.

Consider the following sentences:

*(28)*(ChildrenR-RCl[*who learn easily*] | should start school as early as possible.|)

(29)(Children, | NR-RCl[*who learn easily*],| should start school as early as possible.|)

The restrictive relative clause in (28) tells what kind of children should go to school early. The non-restrictive relative clause in (29) talks about children in general. It tells a) that all children learn easily and b) all children should go to school early.

**D. Comparative Clauses (CCl):** Comparative clauses, like relative clauses, can modify a noun, and unlike relative clauses, they can modify an adjective or an adverb. A CCl generally follows a comparative form (more, less, bigger, etc.), and is introduced by the conjunction *‘than’*. See, for example

(30)(We consume NP(more food)CCl-M[*than we grow*].)

(31)(She is Ajp(more intelligent) CCl-M[*than her brother was at that age*].)

(32)(He works AvP(more diligently) CCl-M[*than Rohan does*].)

**E. Prepositional Clause (PCl):** Just like PPs are like NPs, PCls are like NCls. The structure of a PCl is p+NCl. The *p* is followed by a *Wh-word*. A prepositional clause can function as an adverbial or as a postmodifier. See, for example

(33)(I was surprised PCl-A[*at what I saw*].)

(34)We do not have any proof PCl-M[of what was done yesterday].)

**Source:** Leech, Geoffrey, et al. *English Grammar for Today: A New Introduction*. Macmillan, 1985.